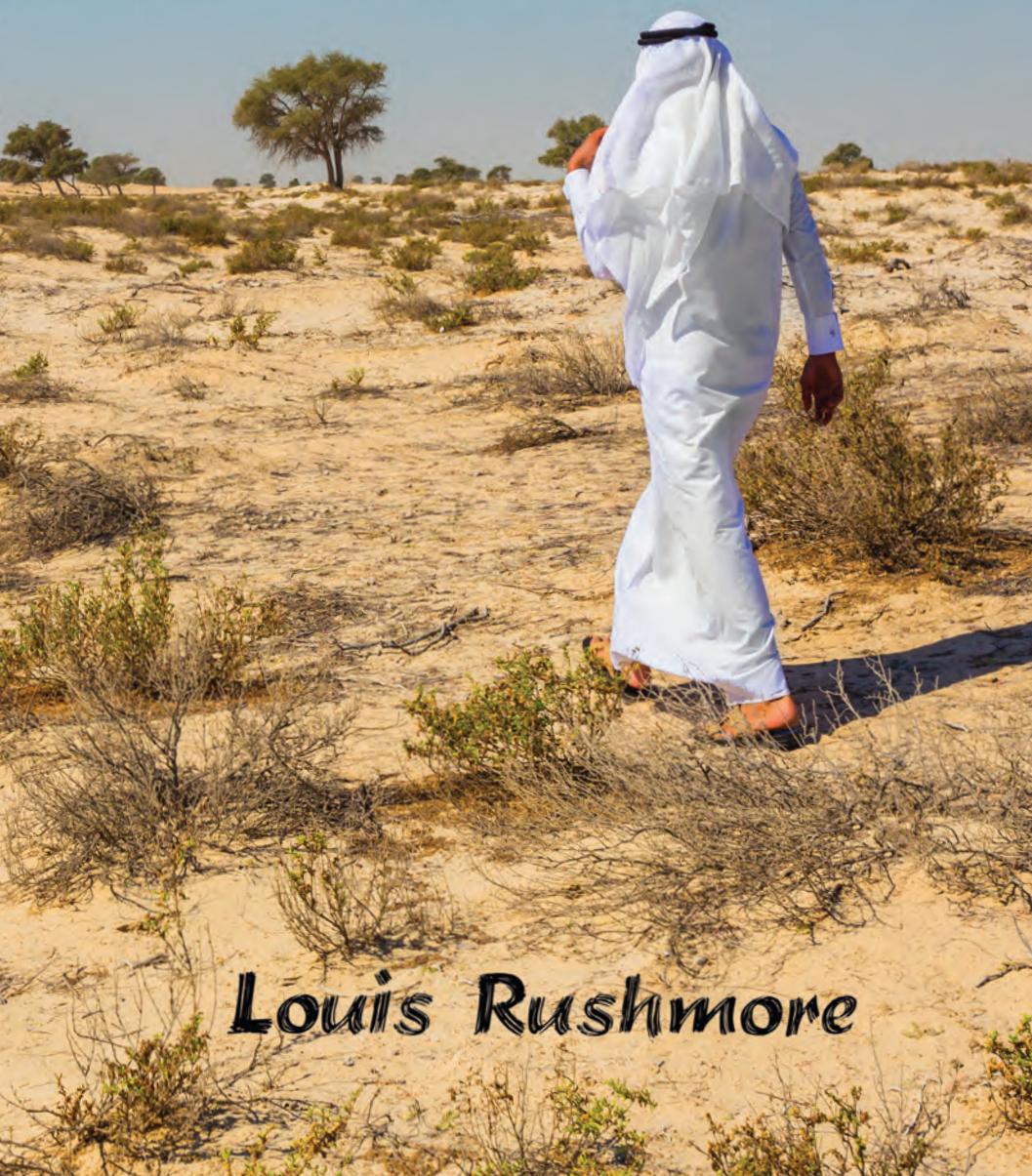


# Job's Journey to Know God



Louis Rushmore

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# Preface

Some of my most fruitful personal studies within God's Word in recent years have been instigated by someone other than myself. Such was the case regarding the backdrop to this particular literary effort.

One day, I received a phone call and was asked to teach an adult Bible class for a period of months for the congregation that oversees my ministry of foreign missions. In the course of the conversation, inquiry was made regarding the various topics for which I was ready to and desired to teach. However, the very next day, upon receiving a follow-up telephone call, I was propositioned to teach the Book of Job, which was not a subject among those that I had put forth for consideration the day before. Yes, I had studied Job, but I had never made the extra preparation necessary to teach it.

Hence, with little time to prepare prior to the beginning of the classes, I began to make necessary preparation. I wasn't done with the preparation when I began teaching, and I could barely keep ahead in my studies before class time came again. Nevertheless, I completed *Job's Journey to Know God*. My notes, though, largely represent a summary of some of the best observations made by numerous other writers in their several volumes. Some of these authors are members of the Lord's church, whereas others are not.

Therefore, if any good arises for the reader from these pages, it is mostly because of the efforts of others from whom I learned. Furthermore, anything herein praiseworthy deserves to be credited to the Godhead.

These notes are presented for any benefit they may provide to students of God's Word. May God and Him only be glorified.

~ Louis Rushmore

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Job is mentioned 59 times in 53 Bible verses. Only one of those references is in the New Testament (James 5:11). Aside from the Book of Job itself, “Job” appears in Genesis 46:13 as a descendent of Issachar, but who is called “Jashub” in similar references in Numbers 26:24 and 1 Chronicles 7:1; the occurrence of “Job” in Genesis 46:13 is not a reference to the star character of the Book of Job. Translations other than the KJV or NKJV do not use the name “Job” in Genesis 46:13. “Job” appears two more times in the Old Testament outside of the Book of Job. Both of those instances are in Ezekiel 14:14, 20.

## **Historical Character of the Book**

“From the earliest of times the book of Job was accepted as a historical composition” (Cox 188). “The book commences in a style that conforms to other Old Testament narratives that are unquestionably historical. . . .’There was a man in the land of Uz...’” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 9). In addition, Job is named along with other real-life Bible characters—Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14:14, 20), which strongly implies that Job was a real-life Bible character, too. “If it is admitted that Noah was a real individual and that there really was a man Daniel, then none should try to argue that Job was a fictionalized character” (Cox 189). Besides the Book of Ezekiel, the New Testament Book of James likewise cites Job with no less indication that he was a real-life Bible character (James 5:11). Three Bible books, then, present Job as a real person, and therefore, as an historical figure—Job, Ezekiel and James.

The Bible books of Jeremiah (25:20) and Lamentations (4:21) concur with the Book of Job (1:1) that “the land of Uz” was a real, geographical location—even if we are not certain of the location of its ruins today. The location of Uz has been suggested to be between

Palestine and Arabia, north of Edom to the Euphrates River. Real people live in real places; Job lived in Uz.

Tradition assigns the home of Job to a region east of the Sea of Galilee, noted for its fertility of soil and large production of grain. This area was once thickly populated. It is now dotted with the ruins of more than three hundred cities. (DeHoff 9)

Extra-biblical literature from about 4,000 years ago mentioned our Job as well (Jackson, *Book of Job* 10), further attesting to the historical man. The Book of Job is an historical narrative. It is **not** figurative literature with symbolic, fictionalize characters presenting some kind of spiritualized message in an elaborate, lengthy parable.

## Type of Literature

“The book of Job is a historical poem based on an event that actually occurred” (DeHoff 10). Sometimes the Book of Job is cited as one of the books of history, whereas usually it is viewed as part of the collection of poetry in the Old Testament. Job is both historical and written in poetical form.

## Date of the Book

The Bible supplies glimpses of patriarchal times preceding the inauguration of Judaism. “There is no hint of Hebrew race, culture or religion” (Waddey 84). The Book of Job fits into this time period before the giving of the Law of Moses and the establishment of the nation of Israel. Hence, the Book of Job provides some insight into patriarchal times.

The historical events of the book are quite obviously from the patriarchal age (i.e., between the creation and the beginning of the Mosaic economy) as the following factors reveal: (1) There are no allusions to the Law of Moses in the book. (2) Job functions as a priest in offering sacrifices for his family (1:5). (3) Job’s longevity is typical of the patriarchs (42:16). (4) The use of the term *kesitah*,

translated “piece of money” (42:11), is elsewhere used only of patriarchal times (cf. Genesis 33:19; Joshua 24:32). (Jackson, *Book of Job* 10)

Job’s gift of an inheritance to his daughters among their brothers (42:15) adds another argument for the patriarchal period... In the case of Leah and Rachel (of that age) who had brothers (Gen. 31:1), the two claimed that they were being deprived of “any portion or inheritance” in their father’s house (Gen. 31:14), as though it was a custom. Whereas, under the Mosaic law there was no provision for a daughter to claim an inheritance of her father’s estate if he had no sons. Following Zelophehad’s death, his five daughters were being deprived of their father’s heritage. They brought the case before Moses and Eleazar on the ground that their father “had no son” (Num. 27:3-4); therefore, they had no brothers. The matter was settled by a word from Jehovah (vv. 6-11). The parallel between what Job did and the claim of Leah and Rachel versus the situation under Moses argues for the patriarchal period for Job. (Hailey 20)

The Book of Job appears to have been written during or at least about patriarchal times, making it as old or older than the writing of the first five books of the Old Testament by Moses. The Book of Job may be the oldest Bible book! However, other than assigning the date of the book to patriarchal times, a more precise date for its production cannot be ascertained. That extra-biblical literature refers to the Book of Job in about 2000 B.C. pushes the origin of the Book of Job and the unfolding of the events that it chronicles more than 500 years before the beginning of Judaism at Mt. Sinai (about 1400 B.C.). It seems that Job lived “about 1,800 years before Christ, and about 600 years after the deluge” (*Barnes’ Notes*).

## **Authorship**

The author of the Book of Job remains an unknown. Even if Job, the main character of the volume, penned it, we do not know any more about him than what is revealed in the Book of Job,

Ezekiel and James. However, knowing the human penman is not as crucial as knowing whether the divine penman is responsible for it. For instance, the authorship of the Book of Hebrews is not known for sure, though many suspect that the apostle Paul may have written it. Yet, the Book of Hebrews is fully accepted for its rightful place among the other 65 books of the Bible. All Bible books have passed the tests of canonicity, including the books of Job and Hebrews.

Several thoughts among students of the Bible ascribe the authorship of Job to various ones, including Moses. “The numerous occurrences of the name [Yahweh]...indicate that a Jew wrote the book, for the name **Yahweh** would be out of place on the lips of an Edomite or other non-Jew” (Hailey 20).

## Job—the Man

Job is an intriguing Bible character for many reasons. For one thing, he was a monogamist in a time and place when polygamy was popular (Waddey 84). As wealthy as he was, Job had the financial means to support many wives and subsequent offspring. However, Job practiced God’s original plan for marriage—one woman and one man for life (Matthew 19:3-6).

What would anyone do with 3,000 camels in the ancient Middle East? Especially in desert regions of that part of the world, camel caravans (Waddey 85) carried goods across vast areas in more direct routes through inhospitable geography than was practical with other types of animals or other transportation methods afforded. Job was a major investor in caravan routes and international trade; he was the ancient counterpart of a modern-day, large-scale trucking company.

Job’s 500 yoke (pairs) of oxen shows that he was heavily invested as well in farming. Oxen were instrumental anciently (and today, too, in developing countries) in plowing the ground and other agricultural activities. “Such a large number indicates a vast farming enterprise” (Waddey 85). The 500 “female donkeys” would have been used for transportation for a big family and large staff besides light, local hauling. The 7,000 sheep provided wool and meat for market (Waddey 85). Job was a very successful, wealthy business man of the ancient world.

The *good life* that Job had been enjoying was exchanged nearly in an instant for a most miserable, painful existence. Men and women of lesser stamina falter and break with God over far less turmoil in their lives. None of us can be sure exactly how we would react to tragedy in our lives before it visits us. First, he **and Mrs. Job** lost all that he possessed, and he possessed much. They suffered the loss of all ten children. “The loss of all of one’s offspring would be unbearable” (Waddey 87). Adding to the devastation of Job was the loss of encouragement and support by his wife, the abandonment of family and friends, and verbal and physical mistreatment by one and all. Then, there were the physical infirmities.

Whatever it was, it appears to have been incurable and characterized by: boils (2:7), itching (2:8), drastic change of appearance (2:12), difficulty eating (3:24), mental depression (3:25), worms and running sores (7:5), shortness of breath (9:18), darkness of eyes (16:16), odorous breath (19:17), loss of weight (19:20), corroding bones and gnawing pain (30:17), blackened skin and fever (30:30). (Jackson, *Book of Job* 22)

## Canonicity

Canonicity “...is the measuring-rod...the testing rule, or critical standard, by which each book of the Bible must be tested before it may be admitted as a part of the Sacred Scriptures” (Miller 88). Tests of canonicity would include: (1) Does the book bear evidence of divine inspiration and authorship? For instance, Bible books do not conflict with each other, and they always represent truth on whatever subject they voice themselves, even if it conflicted with common human thought of the era. Each true Bible book fits intricately with every other Bible book to present an ongoing and consistent message from God—usually which message man would not have authored (e.g., the origin of humanity is closely related to rebellion against God and expulsion from the Garden of Eden; humans fictionalizing an origin story would not indict themselves thusly).

(2) Was the Bible book under consideration accepted by acknowledged, spirit filled prophets of God? The Book of Job is validated by Ezekiel (14:14, 20), Jeremiah (Lamentations 4:21) and

James (5:11). In addition, at least the apostle Paul quoted from the Book of Job (Job 5:13; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Job 35:7; Romans 11:35).

(3) Is the writing genuine, traceable back to the time and to the writer to whom it is attributed? Even if the writer himself is not named or known, are there any geographical, topographical, historical, political or other errors that betray the book as not belonging in the time claimed for itself? Invariably, despite good research, historical fiction slips up in some detail to invalidate its assignment to the ancient age it professes.

(4) Is it true, an authentic record of facts and compatible with divine instructions and historical information presented in other, unquestioned Bible books? (5) Are there credible witnesses that testify to the divine origin of the Bible book—Jewish professors during the time of inspired prophets, the early church in apostolic times, ancient historians and antique Bible manuscripts and Bible translations?

Canonicity is a biblical subject, forasmuch as the Greek word *kanon*, meaning “rule” or standard of faith and practice or boundary, appears in 2 Corinthians 10:13, 15-16 and Galatians 6:16. To a large extent, the Bible makes its own determination or canonicity respecting which books belong in its collection; the Bible books over which there is no dispute provide the rule or canon (*kanon*) to rule on other contenders for inclusion between the covers sounding forth the words, “Holy Bible.” Generally, canonicity passes judgment on literature as to whether it is divine in origin and whether it is biblical material.

The subject of Canonicity seeks to answer these questions:

- (1) Why was each book of the Bible placed there? (2) Why have certain other books been refused a place in the Bible?
- (3) Why have all these books been brought together in one volume? (4) Does this volume contain all the books which properly belong there? ... (5) Has any book which should be there been omitted? (6) Does our Bible contain any book which should not be there? (Miller 90)

Through His providence, God has provided numerous copies of Bible books that are canonical. At the same time, God has expunged from consideration by not preserving even a single copy of writings

though they were inspired that He did not desire included in the Bible. For instance, there was an earlier epistle than 1 Corinthians (5:9), and the apostle Paul had also written an epistle to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16). Therefore, so-called, long lost single manuscripts that someone claims are Bible books fail to match the facts, and without doubt will also fail the various tests of canonicity.

The Book of Job is viewed as canonical especially based on two considerations. “The first is, that it was found in the canon of the Jewish Scriptures to which the Saviour gave his sanction as inspired; and the other is, that it is quoted in the New Testament as of divine authority” (*Barnes’ Notes*).

## Inspiration in the Book of Job

Since the apostle Paul quoted from the speech of Eliphaz (Job 5:13; 1 Corinthians 3:19), were Eliphaz’s words inspired? Throughout the Bible, the student of Scripture always needs to see who is speaking to whom and realize that words by uninspired persons frequently appear in the Holy Book. Sometimes those uninspired utterances are true, whereas sometimes they are at least partly false.

Are the words spoken by Eliphaz inspired? It hardly seems possible and completely unnecessary to affirm that proposition. Certainly the original writer of the great book of Job was inspired... Eliphaz spoke words that were true; although not appropriate nor applicable to the man Job, the words themselves were words of truth and no doubt came from a lifetime of experience and observation. When Paul quoted these words, he did so by the authority and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knew these words to be fundamentally free from error and true from the observation of mankind. ...This is not the only occasion uninspired spokesmen have been quoted in the New Testament. So it is not unique. Paul used another example of this in Titus (1:2-13). This quote used by the inspired apostle was taken from Epimenides who had lived somewhere between the years 630 and 500 B.C. (Cox 189-190)

## Lessons from the Book of Job

Harder for Job than for we who read, study and digest the volume bearing his name, both Job and we learn invaluable lessons from the Book of Job.

Even though Job was called “a perfect and an upright man,” there were still some things that Job learned under this chastisement that he would not have learned otherwise. He admitted freely, “therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not” (Job 42:3). ...The greatest thing about these sufferings outside of the fact that Job himself profited in the long run, is that we too profit from his experience. (Cox 197)

There are numerous notes and lessons that we can extract from studying the Book of Job. Some of them are:

- ❖ Job proved “that prosperity and piety are not necessarily mutually exclusive” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 20).
- ❖ “...[E]ven angels are required to give an account of their activities” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 20).
- ❖ “Piety which depends on prosperity is not genuine” (Waddey 91).
- ❖ The quality of an untested faith is unknown, even to the possessor of faith.
- ❖ “God was not trying to break Job’s faith, he was trying to validate it” (Waddey 91).
- ❖ “Suffering is often a mystery but it should never rob us of our faith in God” (Waddey 91).
- ❖ “Prosperity is not necessarily a sign of righteousness and God’s acceptance” (Waddey 91).
- ❖ Suffering is not necessarily the chastisement or the punishment by God for sins in one’s life.
- ❖ “God permitted Job to suffer because He was proud of him. The patriarch was Jehovah’s answer to Satan’s challenge; he was his Maker’s ‘trophy’” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 14).

One significant error owned and believed by most if not all of the characters in the Book of Job is the mistaken belief that human suffering is directly related to divine retribution for sin. Especially Job's three chief critics based their accusations against Job on this flawed reasoning. Summarized, their thinking was: "1. All suffering is punishment from God for sin. 2. Although apparently you (Job) have been a good man, yet you suffer. 3. Therefore, since you suffer you have been a great sinner" (Hailey 27). Even Job evidently had believed that proposition—until he became the recipient of great suffering, and he knew (as did God) that he was living his life conscientiously free from sinful pursuits as well as actively performing good works. No wonder Job, too, was perplexed in addition to the effect of his losses and suffering.

The apostles of Christ, likewise, harbored the same misgivings about suffering and its relationship to sin. "Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him'" (John 9:1-3 NKJV); our Lord subsequently healed the blind man and declared Himself to be the Son of God (John 9:4-41). Jesus also addressed this generally held misconception about the relationship between sin and suffering in Luke 13:1-5.

This same misunderstanding regarding the relationship between sin and suffering persists today, among non-Christians and Christians, too. For instance, when my Catholic aunt was 40-years-old, she and my uncle had an unplanned pregnancy, which resulted in the birth of a baby with some mental deficiencies. She declared that this came about as punishment from God for her sins. More recently, a Gospel preacher in India who does TV, radio and translation work wrote regarding my wife Bonnie's health: "We came to know from Sister Betty's mail that Sister Bonnie has pancreatic cancer. Really we are appalled about her sickness, and **we are surprised how God's children are suffering from such a disease**" (emphasis added). Like Job's friends, and formerly Job himself, even Christians today seem to equate blessings with righteousness and suffering with sin. "...[S]ome church-members and some evangelists...seem to think

primarily of material blessings and prosperity in return for serving God. ...the concept is false” (Hailey 28).

## Brief Overview of the Book of Job

The Book of Job fleshes out with a real-life demonstration of the biblical principle embedded in Romans 8:18. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (NKJV). The Book of Job deals with the problem of human suffering. More specifically, “[t]he fundamental problem with which we are confronted in the Book of Job is why do the righteous suffer?” (Strauss xxi).

When one has lost everything he has—his possessions, his children, his health which leaves him suffering excruciating pain—when he loses his wife’s support and faith in God’s concern, endures the accusations of his friends and becomes an outcast from society, how is he to harmonize this with the providence of an all-wise, all-powerful and loving God? (Hailey 15)

Our modern-day lesser woes produce the same or similar frustration in us as well. The Book of Job is as current in application as it was for Job. We, though, have insight through the inspired Word of God that was not immediately or maybe ever available to the patriarch.

Simplified, the Book of Job may be categorized thusly. “I. Job is tested (chapters 1-2); II. Job’s controversy with his three friends (chapters 3-31); III. Elihu’s presentation (chapters 32-37); IV. Jehovah speaks to Job (chapters 38-41); V. Job is blessed (chapter 42)” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 11).

# Chapter 2: Job Is Tested (Job 1-2)

## The Character of Job (1:1-5)

Job is described in the very first verse of the book (and verse 8) as “perfect” (KJV) or “blameless” (NKJV) and “upright,” which means he was ‘pious’ and ‘pleasing to God.’ Job’s life was not characterized by riotous living, but consistently by godliness. He “feared God” or exhibited pronounced reverence toward Jehovah. Job “shunned evil” (NKJV) or literally **‘turned evil off in his life.** Though he was not sinlessly perfect, he tried to be. Consequently, God was well pleased with him. No one living today is sinlessly perfect either (Romans 3:10, 23), and yet, Jesus Christ becomes in actuality the Savior of all those today who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

From verse 5, we see that Job eagerly and frequently interceded with God on behalf of his children through the patriarchal worship of animal sacrifices. In this, we see his reverence for Almighty God. Job was of “impeccable character” and his devout manner of life and worship was “habitual” (Halley 35). We, today, would do well to imitate Job in these ways!

Job was a morally mature child of God. He exhibited integrity and sincerity in all of his life as one who made no distinction regarding his conduct and profession between occasions of worship or piety and the balance of his life. Job was “without moral blemish” (*Bible Knowledge*). Reminiscent of Ephesians 5:11 for the Christian, Job was “positively devout” and “negatively opposed to sin” (*Pulpit Commentary*). Job possessed a reputation both with God and man that was far above his peers; we Christians, likewise, need to emulate this quality we view in Job. He was a mortal man as we, too, are humans; therefore, it is not too much for us to duplicate in us such a reputation with our fellow human beings and with God.

Verses 2-3 note the unsurpassed wealth that Job possessed (which was discussed in the “Introduction”). Despite temptations to commit sin associated with material affluence (Matthew 19:24; 1 Timothy 6:10, 17), in Job (as with Abraham) one sees “that prosperity and piety are not necessarily mutually exclusive” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 20). Particularly among Christians in the western world, we need to tread carefully because our riches generally contrast with the poverty experienced by most people on the planet; we must be careful lest our blessings become a curse to us.

## The Heavenly Conference #1 (1:6-12)

The misfortunes of Job are prefaced with celestial beings or angels (cf. Job 1:6; 38:7) assembling in the presence of Almighty God in Heaven. Satan, too, presents himself, but as “an adversary or an accuser in a court of justice” (*Barnes’ Notes*). The loyal angels were there to give accounts of their ministries (Hebrews 1:14) like ambassadors reporting home respecting their ambassadorships. The Devil, though, reported that he had been traversing the whole earth, which reminds us of the apostle Peter’s warning, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8 NKJV).

At this point, God introduced Job as an admirable specimen of righteousness, as if to counter charges leveled against humanity by Satan. Certainly throughout history, there have been ample examples of wickedness among mankind that would appear to substantiate any accusations by the Devil. Satan responded that Job only served God out of self-interest because of the abundant blessings showered upon him by God; in other words, God bought Job’s fidelity. The Accuser’s complaint was two-fold—against God and Job. The implication is that either God is not worthy to be served or that no mortal is genuinely loyal to God, but may demonstrate faithfulness to God only because of and to what extent he may receive divinely given benefits.

The Devil did not decry the righteous **behavior** of Job, which Job’s three primary critics unsuccessfully attempted to do over and over again. Instead, Satan cited Job’s **motivation** for his righteous behavior as being impure and blameworthy.

Why did God accept Satan's experiment about Job? "This scenario was not ...a matter of God giving in to Satan as much as... God proving the love of his servant [Job]" (Cox 197). "For the benefit of man, Jehovah accepts the challenge. He will allow Job to be severely tried in order to demonstrate that there is such a thing as noncovetous righteousness" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 21). Subsequently, God permits Satan to test Job as long as he does not touch the man Job himself.

## The Misfortunes of Job—Round #1 (1:13-19)

Swiftly, Job plummeted from a pinnacle of health and happiness to the depths of poverty and sorrow; Satan coupled the severity of the tragedies with the rapidity of their occurrences in a focused attempt to break Job's allegiance to Jehovah. "In a series of four rapid-fire blows, Job receives the message that: (a) He is financially bankrupt; a series of marauding raids and natural disasters have wiped him out. He is reduced to the level of a pauper. ... (b) His children—all ten—are killed..." (Jackson, *Book of Job* 21).

Beginning with verse 13, each calamity was preceded by normal and routine activities. Hence, each catastrophe occurred suddenly and without notice (cf. Matthew 24:36-44). The Sabeans (verse 15) and Chaldeans (verse 17) were both marauding tribes at that juncture in Patriarchal history before the eventual development respectively into the nations of Sheba (Yemen) and Babylon (part of Iraq). The Sabeans were a large band of robbers who overwhelmed their targets, whereas the Chaldeans were more warlike and organized accordingly into "three bands."

Verse 16 describes deadly lightning falling from the sky upon the sheep and the servants. Verse 19 appears to define tornado-like winds that leveled the building in which Job's children were gathered. "Of these calamities, two were from the hands of evil men – the Sabeans (v. 15), and the Chaldeans (v. 17); two were from the forces of nature – fire of God from heaven (v. 16), and a great wind from the wilderness (v. 19)" (Hailey 38). Within the parameters set by God, Satan had access to evildoers and the natural world to afflict Job.

## **Job Reacts (1:20-22)**

Doubtlessly, Job reacted to complete devastation in his life in a way that we hope would be characteristic of us were we to suffer similar things, and yet, we have no way of knowing just how we would respond unless we, too, endured the same pains. God's trust was well placed in Job as he tore his robe and shaved his head as symbol of his great sorrow, and then humbly yielded himself to the Sovereign of the universe who is ultimately in charge of all that is. "Job has justified the Lord's confidence in him and Satan's blows have, in fact, backfired. There is such a thing as true devotion without a pricetag attached!" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 22).

Severe hardships drove Job toward God—to worship Him—rather than away from God. This by itself proved that Job was not tied to God by material prosperity and good times. Clarke portrays Job's attitude thusly: "Seeing I have lost my temporal goods, and all my domestic comforts, may God alone be all my portion!" Compare Job 1:21 with Ecclesiastes 5:15 and 1 Timothy 6:7.

"Job had listened with shocked silence to the reports of the first three messengers; but now upon hearing the report of the death of his sons and daughters, he demonstrated in dignified action the deeply felt emotions of his heart" (Hailey 38).

Job neither sinned nor foolishly accused God of wrongdoing (verse 22). "He did not give way to any action, passion, or expression, offensive to his Maker" (Clarke). "In all these threatening circumstances, Job did not sin, either mentally or by some overt act like charging God..." (Strauss 13). "Instead of cursing God, as Satan said Job would do, Job blessed the Lord!" (Wiersbe). "It is truly remarkable that Job followed adversity with adoration, woe with worship. Unlike so many people, he did not give in to bitterness; he refused to blame God..." (*Bible Knowledge*). Instead, "...he faced his calamities with all the dignity of one who commits himself unto Him that judgeth righteously. ...Job acknowledged his faith in God's overall providence..." (Hailey 40).

## **The Heavenly Conference #2 (2:1-6)**

"The Lord repeated His estimate of Job's character, adding both a commendation of Job and a condemnation of Satan" (Hailey 41).

However, in the second appearance of Satan before God in the Book of Job, "...Satan claims that the test has not been severe enough" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 22). He contended that a man would surrender all of his possessions if necessary in order to spare his life. On that basis, the Devil surmised that Job remained faithful to God, but that he would renounce God if his body were tormented.

"The motives of Jehovah and Satan were poles apart. God's purpose in permitting Satan to test Job was to save him through a perfected faith; whereas, Satan's purpose was to destroy him through a defeated faith" (Hailey 42).

## **The Misfortunes of Job—Round #2 (2:7-10)**

It is difficult to diagnose Job's ailments from afar and across thousands of years.

Whatever it was, it appears to have been incurable and characterized by: boils (2:7), itching (2:8), drastic change of appearance (2:12), difficulty eating (3:24), mental depression (3:25), worms and running sores (7:5), shortness of breath (9:18), darkness of eyes (16:16), odorous breath (19:17), loss of weight (19:20), corroding bones and gnawing pain (30:17), blackened skin and fever (30:30). (Jackson, *Book of Job* 22)

Job's misery was total: financially insolvent, intense bereavement and broken health. If that were not enough, Job lost the moral support of his wife, too (verse 9). "Job was exceedingly afflicted, and apparently dying through sore disease; yet his soul was filled with gratitude to God" (Clarke). Like Job's wife, few living today, doubtless, could profess understanding Job's staying the course in his allegiance to God.

On one hand, Job's wife appears to be of lesser spiritual stature than her husband. She may remind one of the poor counsel Adam received from his wife Eve. Jackson noted that "...it is vital for the faithful child of God to marry a companion who is spiritually compatible" (*Book of Job* 23).

However, she also had suffered most of the hardships that had come to her husband—losing all of one's wealth in one day and the

loss of all of the ten children whom she carried, gave birth and nursed. Finally, she observed her husband in great physical pain for which there was no foreseeable relief or cure. Evidently, she thought that death would relieve Job of the mental and physical pains, and though her husband persevered, her faith had broken. Satan may have correctly predicted the outcome of Mrs. Job's faith and preserved her life so she could be used as an additional tool to torment Job. "Job's response expressed a pained disappointment; surely he had every right to expect better things of his wife!" (Hailey 44).

Whereas Satan accused Job of possessing a self-serving, simulated righteousness, he was mistaken about Job. Yet, Mrs. Job apparently undergirded her faith and righteousness with material prosperity and good times. Therefore, when poverty replaced prosperity and the worst of times substituted for good times, her faith faltered. Whose faith do we emulate today—Job's or that of Mrs. Job? Job, though, retained his faith in the providence of God, despite not understanding its workings on his behalf (Romans 8:28). "In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10b).

This scene closes with poor Job sitting in a refuse heap scraping his wounded and itching body with broken pieces of pottery (verse 8). Job's purported friends find him under those circumstances.

## The Friends of Job (2:11-13)

Purportedly, Job's three friends had agreed to go to Job for the purpose of comforting him. Initially, they appear as dear friends who were heartbroken and sympathetic to Job. They wept at the sight of him; they tore their robes as had Job as a cultural demonstration of sorrow or troubling; they humbled or abased themselves by putting dust on their heads (cf. Joshua 7:6; Lamentations 2:10); and they silently communed seven days with Job in the desolate place to which he had resorted—voluntarily or perhaps involuntarily. So far, so good!

Strauss suggests that the "seven days and seven nights" that the friends sat in silence was customary of mourning for the dead (22); see Genesis 50:10. Job was all but dead, and there was every reason to believe that he was dying; Job would not take his own life, but he had resigned himself to the inevitable end of his diseases.

Sometimes there are no words that if expressed can adequately comfort ones in great distress of mind or body (and great distress of body leads to equal distress of mind). Just being there with the hurting itself is an uplift for the wounded in body or in spirit that words fail to bring forth. “Silence is often the deepest comfort” (Strauss 21).

Hailey, though, given the later harsh expression of condemnation by these “three friends” suggests that the silence was anything but comforting. Rather, the silence itself was the first wave of condemnation expressed toward Job for his assumed sins for which it was also assumed that God was severely punishing Job (44-45).

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39 NKJV)

# **Chapter 3: Job's Controversy with His Three Friends (Job 3-31)**

“Except for 3:1-2, the entire section from 3:1—31:40 is in poetic form. This is important for understanding the text, as poetry is parallel in literary form, which means that each line is not necessarily a new thought” (Strauss 25). “...3:1ff is in the form of Hebrew poetry—a parallelism where each statement is repeated with slightly varying language employed” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 27). “Here the poetic part of the book begins...” (Clarke).

## **Job Despises the Day of His Birth (3:1-10)**

Job was “...the prisoner of calamities for which he had no explanation. ...Job’s speech breaks the silence between him and his friends. ...Why should one be born if his lot is to be such as he now experiences? ...He met his affliction with a curse upon the day of his birth. Why should he have been born for such calamities?” (Hailey 47). In great suffering, like Jeremiah years later (Jeremiah 20:14-18), Job rued the day of his birth since his life had descended into extreme mental anxiety and physical suffering, for which he could find no relief for either. “[H]e wished that he had never been born!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 27). “Had he not been born, then trouble would have been hid (sic) from his eyes” (Hailey 49). For Job’s part, the day on the calendar that corresponded to the day of his birth could just be skipped. “Let there always be a blank there...” (*Barnes’ Notes*). “He wanted his birthday to be wiped from the calendar” (*Bible Knowledge*). More than most people, Job had no interest in his birthday being remembered. Regarding the calendar Job, hence, began to “vent the agonies of his soul” (Clarke).

“Though both Job and Jeremiah wished that they had not been born, neither ever for a moment considers the possibility of suicide” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 29). Why is that? In spite of intense suffering, these great men retained their faith and knowledge of the existence of a Creator God, before whom one day they would appear—to face

God as Judge. “Job cursed his birthday, but not his God” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*).

## Job Wishes that He Had Died at Birth (3:11-19)

“If the day of his conception cannot be blotted out, Job, in view of his acute condition, wishes for the next best thing—that he had been born dead” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 29). Four times in two verses (3:11-12), Job asked “why” he had not died at birth—been stillborn. Why had he not been the object of a miscarriage? Why, he asked, was I nursed rather than allowed to perish as an unwanted child? That death, Job reasoned, would have been preferable to the agonizing pain and suffering he was experiencing, and which surely would lead to his death. “Such inquiries question the wisdom and purpose of God” (Hailey 50). Who are we as mortals to call into question the providence of Almighty God?

Like non-Christians and unthinking Christians today, Job’s view of death as a release from earthly woes fails to consider the immortality of souls, the Hadean realm and the eternal habitations after Judgment of Heaven or Hell. It is common even today to hear a Christian incorrectly presume aloud that a suffering non-Christian upon death is free from the agonies that he or she may have been experiencing—for which there may be no earthly relief. If unprepared to meet God, worse torment awaits from which there will never be any release.

“In a descending scale, Job began with the great, ‘kings and counselors,’ and proceeded to the low, ‘prisoners’ and ‘servants’” (Hailey 51). At least from a purely human and earthly perspective, Job concludes that the small and the great as well as the stillborn would rest alike in death—immune from all the troubles of life. “Death is the great leveler of all; in it there is no distinction. From Job’s point of view, death was a deliverer from the harshness and suffering of this life. ...in it there are no classes” (Hailey 52).

Understandably, Job had a decidedly negative and one-sided view of life when he uttered these speeches. There is more to life than the *downside*, and Job had experienced the grandest highlights of life previously. Pain and suffering can crowd out of one’s life even the memory of better times that preceded the bad times. “Job’s

present misery blots out all the happy memories of the good years” (Strauss 30). He needed to be more balanced in his assessment of the human condition, and so do we. Of course, that is easier said than implemented in one’s life, especially in the face of severe misery. Maybe we who are enjoying the good days can help our fellows who are experiencing the bad days to navigate them more easily (Romans 12:15).

## Job Desires to Die in the Face of Relentless Suffering (3:20-26)

“Earlier, Satan had charged that the man of Uz served God selfishly because the Lord had ‘made a hedge’ of blessings about him. Now, with the same term, Job complains that God has *hedged him in with suffering!* This is the first indication that the patriarch now *blames God* for his anguish. With his lips, he has sinned” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 31). For being hedged in, compare Lamentations 3:7 and 9.

Hailey (53) concurs with a note by Jackson above that though Job earnestly desired to die, by which he supposed was the only way he could obtain freedom from pain and suffering, he did not entertain suicide as his solution. “Bewilderment intensifies because he cannot see a way out” (Strauss 32).

Clarke summarized these verses with Job’s underlying question, “Why is life granted to him who is incapable of enjoying it...?”

Whose pain and anguish are so great that they would regard it as a privilege to die. Much as people dread death, and much as they have occasion to dread what is beyond, yet there is no doubt that this often occurs. Pain becomes so intense, and suffering is so protracted, that they would regard it as a privilege to be permitted to die. Yet that sorrow “must” be intense which prompts to this wish, and usually must be long continued. In ordinary cases such is the love of life, and such the dread of death and of what is beyond, that people are willing to bear all that human nature can endure rather than meet death... (*Barnes’ Notes*)

Especially preachers who visit the sick in their beds, as well as family members who tend to their loved ones to the point of death, are well-acquainted with the final sentiments of the dying. Not infrequently, one of the fading souls will say or intimate something to the effect, “No more!” or “Enough!”

From our vantage with the completed Word of God in our hands, perhaps overestimating our invulnerability (1 Corinthians 10:12), it is too easy to be under sympathetic to Job’s utterances in favor of death and of blaming God. “We cannot see through Job’s eyes” since we have not experienced the tragedies in life that afflicted him mercilessly (Hailey 53). We need to empathize with the downtrodden to the point of helping to lift their earthly burdens when we can (Matthew 25:31-46; Galatians 6:10).

Job considered the fact that his former good life was not shielded from calamity. All of us, if we think about it, are aware that none of us are immune from sickness, accident or tragedies. Therefore, we must steel ourselves against those possibilities in case some unfortunate circumstances afflict us. Then, perhaps, we will more easily arise to the occasion in a godly manner. Christians need to guard their tongues and their actions in inconvenient situations of life. **Trouble will come!** Yet, we must look to the heavenly hereafter and make preparations thereto. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18 NKJV). In the case of Job, “there has been no intermission of sorrows” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*).

The Bible evidences by its very content, especially regarding its characters that God praises therein, that it is divine in origin, rather than of human origin. “The truthfulness of the inspired volume appears in its so faithfully recording the blemishes, as well as the graces...” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*). Writing his own biography, no man would announce to the world his follies and sins, but instead, he would mention merely the highlights and admirable achievements in his life. God is the biographer of famous and infamous Bible characters whose names and deeds appear in the pages of inspiration.

# **Chapter 4: The First Cycle of Speeches (Job 4-14)\***

The reoccurring speeches between Job and his so-called friends can be very wearisome and repetitious. Later, the exchanges between Elihu and Job are not much less exhausting. The arguments resemble debates that fail to convince anyone contrary to his stated position. In that vein, they are useless and futile attempts at persuasion. The disputes remind me of the bantering back and forth between opposing opinions on so-called television news talk shows, which personally I detest and avoid. Of course, these cycles of speeches, though not themselves inspired, appear in the Book of Job by inspiration of the Holy Spirit; therefore, they must have a purpose that we need to ferret out for our understanding (Romans 15:4). Yet, we will not treat in these notes the study of the Book of Job on a verse by verse basis. Instead, we will make observations from segments of Scripture in Job. Please read the Book of Job in addition to or alongside of considering these observations.

The speeches of the three friends and Job are not altogether a debate, though there are elements of such in numerous places. Nor are they essentially speeches of one man's answering the speech of the preceding speaker, though this occurs at times. In some instances the speaker directs his speech to Job, and vice versa; in others a speaker will direct his attention to a point of controversy. There are times when the speaker will be talking about God; however, at times Job is talking to God, and at other times he is talking to himself. (Hailey 55)

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\* Generally, the subtitles and subsequent groupings of passages herein follow those noted by Wayne Jackson.

Largely, the three friends had a theological position that apparently they came to assert, and they dogmatically maintained that doctrinal stance throughout their speeches. Namely, they believed that God is responsible for **all** punishment or chastisement. God **only** punishes and **always** disciplines evildoers with physical adversities in life. God **never** punishes, chastises or brings about physical hardship upon faithful children of God. The retribution of God **always** manifests itself toward humanity in physical persecution, leading up to death, for the wicked and affluence for the righteous. “The friends see material reward as the blessing for serving God...” (Hailey 55).

Therefore, in view of the tragedies that befell Job, the three friends were confident that Job was a terrible sinner. Their reasoning was (1) God does not persecute the righteous; (2) God persecuted Job with the loss of all of his possessions, the death of his ten children and the loss of his health. (3) Therefore, Job was a dreadful sinner, guilty of grievous sins. According to that way of thinking, Job had brought all of these heartbreakingly misfortunes upon himself. Sure of their theology, the friends saw it as their mission to convict Job of his sins and bring him to repentance. The three counselors were equally confident that upon Job’s repentance, God would restore wealth and health to Job. The three friends and Job all believed this flawed theology. Job, though, was experiencing a live and a painful refutation of that way of thinking, because he knew that any sins for which he may have been guilty were not commensurate with the degree of his suffering.

To say the least, Job’s friends were misguided. They erred in thinking that **only God** is directly responsible for human afflictions, calamities and persecutions. Further, they blundered by imagining that **God only** punishes evildoers and that **God always** brings about physical hardship upon sinners. The friends were shortsighted to think that **God would never** chastise a faithful man (or woman). In addition, they were incorrect to assert that God always compensates sinfulness and rewards faithfulness with material prosperity. Almost always, all-encompassing words like “all,” “only,” “always” and “never” do not apply beyond a contextual application that is far short of being “all,” “only,” “always” and “never.”

The friends were simply wrong theologically about God's activity overall and specifically about the reaction of God toward sinners and saints. They were wrong also for applying general truths specifically to Job when they did not pertain to him and his situation. Too, the friends erroneously perceived of the benefits of serving God and the downside to disobeying God relating exclusively to the material world in which we live; little or no consideration appears to have occurred to them that there are spiritual ramifications for obeying as well as for disobeying God.

Despite their shortcomings, the three friends arrayed their cases before and against Job, doubtless with sincere and good, but misguided, intentions. Whereas Job had been a master counselor of others, his friends took it upon themselves now to be his counselors.

## **Eliphaz Speaks (4:1-5:27)**

Evidently, Eliphaz was the oldest of the three friends, and hence, he was afforded the opportunity to reply first to Job. This regard for one's senior persists in at least some Asian cultures today. "Eliphaz [was] speaking from his own observation. ...But not all suffering or calamities are the consequence of one's own sins..." (Hailey 58). Then, Eliphaz resorted to subjectivity when he introduced a dream that he purportedly had experienced. Though God sometimes communicated with prophets historically by dreams, (1) without miraculous validation, (2) without being of the nature of prophecy and fulfillment or (3) conflicting with known divine instruction, they were not to be regarded as originating with God. "But was this statement a direct revelation from God? Probably not; the whole experience doesn't seem to fit God's pattern for revealing truth. For one thing, it lacks the authority of 'The word of the Lord came to me saying' or 'Thus says the Lord'" (*Bible Exposition*).

Summarized, "Eliphaz had stated his view that suffering is punishment for sin or wrong-doing (4:6-11); punishment looks back to the past. He now [5:17-27] introduces suffering as a means of hastening, educating or instructing, which is intended to correct the individual's life" (Hailey 67). "Eliphaz said Job's problems were disciplinary: God was correcting him, so Job should welcome His

discipline, not despise it” (*Bible Knowledge*). While the principles are valid and supported by teachings in the Old Testament (Proverbs 11:18; Hosea 8:7) and in the New Testament (Galatians 6:7-8; James 1:2-3; Hebrews 12:5-13), too, in this case, they did not apply correctly to Job in his particular set of circumstances. This was an instance of making a misapplication of truths.

Adam Clarke portrays Eliphaz as advising “...Job to be patient and submissive, with a promise of all secular prosperity, and a happy death in a mature and comfortable old age, v. 17-27.” Eliphaz supposed that any prosperity that an evil man or his family enjoys would be short lived and cut short by God’s wrath. That, he thought, must have been demonstrated in Job before and after his misery. Eliphaz essentially told Job what he would do were he in Job’s place—quit complaining and appeal to God if he were innocent (Clarke). This Job did over and over throughout the book, but he went too far in accusations that he made against God and in the undesirable qualities that Job attributed to God. We like Job must patiently accept chastisement from God (Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-13) or even endure suffering or persecution from evil men (2 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 3:14; 4:12-16).

Eliphaz did not believe that Job was innocent. Based on his theology, the miserable specimen of humanity exhibited in the broken down Job was evidence enough of his seriously flawed and sinful life. Eliphaz and his friends assumed that it were an axiomatic truth that suffering is **always** the result of sin in one’s life. They appealed to the collective, human wisdom from antiquity before them to substantiate their charges against Job. “Eliphaz’s authority for his theory was what he himself had seen in his lifetime... Inherent in this authority base, however, is a flaw: his observations, though undoubtedly extensive, were not universal. Bildad’s authority was history... supposedly a broader base than the observations of one man” (*Bible Knowledge*). “The problem with arguing from observation is that our observations are severely limited. Furthermore, we can’t see the human heart as God can and determine who is righteous in His sight” (*Bible Exposition*).

## Job Replies to Eliphaz (6:1-7:21)

“With friends like that, who needs enemies?” is a familiar expression to us, and it certainly applied to Job’s friends with whom he was engaging in a form of polemics. We call these sort—*fair-weather friends*. Job realized that at that juncture, Eliphaz represented not only himself but also the other two friends. “Job’s friends, so called, supported each other in their attempts to blacken the character of this worthy man; and their hand became the heavier, because they supposed the hand of God was upon him” (Clarke). Whereas Job might have expected his friends to have been comparable to an oasis for a thirsty caravan in the desert, they rather proved to be more like the dangerous disappointment of that caravan in the desert finding instead the water source dried up completely. Job also compared the assault against him by his *friends* to the ungodly assault some would make against defenseless orphans.

Job asserted that his so-called friends had interjected themselves into his circumstances without invitation. As such, they should have minded their own business! They went beyond what either God or man would condone. Therefore, they were especially deserving of censure. If, though, he had invited them or requested something of them, then, there would have been justification for them addressing his situation.

Job proceeds to state that their conduct in this had been greatly aggravated by the fact that they had come voluntarily. He had not asked them to come. He had desired no gift; no favor. He had not applied to them in any way or form for help. They had come of their own accord, and when they came they uttered only the language of severity and reproach. If he had asked them to aid him, the case would have been different. That would have given them some excuse for interposing in the case. (*Barnes’ Notes*)

Due to their errant theology, Job’s friends directly and indirectly accused him of sins. Job objected and called upon them to enumerate the sins for which God was punishing him. Job was willing to admit his human imperfections, but it would have been sinful of itself to admit to sins of which he was not guilty, as his

friends were trying to compel him to do. Any earlier hope that Job may have entertained that his friends may comfort and uplift him was surely crushed by their unceasing dialogue against him.

Then, Job proceeded to complain **about** God. Job was perfectly willing to repent before God (if he just knew what God's accusation against him was), and he wondered why God would not forgive him—and subsequently relieve him of his painful suffering. Job felt as though there were a target on his back, at which God was shooting poisoned arrows. Job justified his complaints, based on cause and effect, with the illustration that animals don't complain when they are well fed, but rather when they are hungry. There were genuine reasons underlying Job's grumbling. *Pulpit Commentary* portrays Job as claiming the **right** to complain.

"Job complained that God's opposition to him was out of proportion to his importance..." (Hailey 82). Job (as well as contemporary mankind, too) failed to fully appreciate the seriousness of sins. He imagined that some sins were less repulsive to God than other sins, and therefore, some sins merited less adverse reaction from God than other sins. However, *generally speaking*, God views all sins alike, any of which will result in spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Liars and murderers, for instance, have the same divine condemnation awaiting them (Revelation 21:8). It is true, though, that God hates some sins more than others, which are referred to as "abominations" (Deuteronomy 7:25; Proverbs 6:16). Relegating sins to categories of "venial" and "mortal" as Catholics do, or supposing there are insignificant sins (e.g., "little white lies"), is doctrinally incorrect. Furthermore, God does not necessarily or always punish sin with physical consequences, but assuredly He will punish souls spiritually for sins of which they remain guilty as they appear in eternity for final Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Finally, once more Job longed to die to obtain release from the desperate, seemingly irreversible and unrelenting circumstances into which he had fallen. "Job's view of life was gloomy indeed, and our's (sic) would be as well were it not for the greater light of the gospel revelation" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 37). "...[T]here is a limit to what he [Job] can endure...he felt that he had reached it now" (Hailey 74). After all, by now Job had been suffering variously for "months" (Job 7:3). Poor Job had "no intermission to his sorrows"

(*Barnes' Notes*) day or night. He found no hour of day or night in which he found any relief from intense bodily pain and discomfort, aside from the agony of mind over the losses he suffered and his confusion about his spiritual relationship with God. Job viewed it all as hopelessness from which did not expect to escape in this life. Since man is appointed to die (*Ecclesiastes 3:2; 9:5; Hebrews 9:27*), Job vindicated his expressed will to die as apparently his time to pass away—and relieve him of his great suffering. Yet, Job patiently waited on the Lord God regarding the day of his death (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*) rather than opting for suicide. Wasting away physically especially, Job saw that death could not have been far away; his condition was terminal.

Job's references to death in 7:8-10 do not refer to whether he perceived of an eventual resurrection or not. Job merely discussed death from the material perspective of one going to the grave will not resurrect to resume the ordinary affairs of life (e.g., living in his house again), and eventually even one's family will remember the dead less and less as time goes on. Students of God's Word always need to guard against two things in particular: (1) reading something into the text that is not there, and (2) viewing a contextual narrative armed with biblical information now that was not available to the Bible character whose words and actions are under consideration. For instance, we who are living today have in the New Testament an abundance of information that our counterparts in the Old Testament simply did not have and could not have known.

Job's aggravation had reached a pinnacle of pain—physically, emotionally and spiritually. All of his children were dead—ten funerals—at the same time! All of his possessions were gone! His wife was no longer supportive but hurtful. His friends tormented him. His body was racked with excruciating pain without end. If and when he did fall asleep, he was buffeted severely with nightmares! In the same predicament, we like Job would say, “I can't take it anymore!” Doubtlessly, many of us would have reached our breaking point far before Job did.

## Bildad Speaks (8:1-22)

Bildad and the other two “friends” displayed in their perception of compensation and retribution, uprightness and wickedness, the very accusation that Satan had made initially against Job. Satan erred respecting Job; the principle character of this Old Testament Bible book **did not** serve God in order to receive earthly wealth. “Bildad and the other friends can see only material prosperity as the reward for righteousness and service to God. ...they developed no comprehension of a service out of love and joy in God’s fellowship or an appreciation of His grace and spiritual intimacy” (Hailey 86). What has changed between then and now? Mankind generally, as well as Christians, too, still commonly operates under the misguided philosophy of the so-called “health and wealth gospel,” otherwise named “prosperity theology,” “prosperity gospel” or “gospel of success” (*Wikipedia*). Though “obedience to the faith” (Romans 1:5; 16:26) is absolutely crucial to one’s salvation (Hebrews 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17), the **reason or motivation** leading one to comply with God’s Word is also critically important (Romans 6:17). Reader, presuming that you obey God, “**Why do you comply with biblical instruction?**”

By way of illustration, a driver who obeys the speed limit laws posted along the highways may be motivated to do so merely because he or she wants to avoid a traffic fine. Or, such a driver may also have respect for law to the extent that he also wants to avoid being a lawbreaker. Regarding one’s vehicular conduct, the reason for complying with the law matters little. The outcome for not speeding is not being penalized with stinging monetary punishment. Obeying God, though, requires internal and external compliance, comparable to acceptable worship involving “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). An added benefit of **true conversion** is that after we get right on the inside or spiritually, it is less difficult to do things correctly outwardly. After we give ourselves wholly to God on His terms as the Macedonians did (Acts 8:1-5), everything else is comparatively easy!

As we would say today, Bildad was “brutal” in his treatment of Job. He conveyed to the patriarch that his children must have been evil and great sinners, who suffered sudden, violent deaths as just recompense by God. He followed a popular line of thought—blame

the victim! “Bildad assumes this absolutely; Eliphaz had only hinted at it (Job 10:4). Both presume to know what could be known only to the Searcher of hearts” (*Pulpit Commentary*). “It must have pained Job deeply when Bildad said that Job’s children had died because they had sinned (Job 8:4). Bildad probably thought he was encouraging Job: ‘Perhaps they were not killed because of *your* sins but because of their own sins. They can’t change anything now, but you can; so don’t wait too long!’” (*Bible Exposition*).

Bildad believed that righteous people are immune from suffering! He mistakenly applied his notion of “cause and effect... based on insufficient evidence” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 39) to Job respecting his losses and physical suffering plus the death of Job’s children. No wonder the Holy Spirit caused James to pen, “Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” (James 4:11-12). We can and must be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:16-20); there are aspects of righteousness and wickedness that are open and observable. However, not even faithful Christians have the ability to pass judgment on the unseen things, and we do not have responsibility to assign anyone to either eternal destination, even if they are vile sinners. (Preachers beware! We cannot really preach anyone into Heaven or into Hell.)

“If Job had *not* sinned, then his suffering would mean that God had perverted His ways. ...Obviously, then, Job had sinned” (*Bible Knowledge*), Bildad reasoned. “Anyone who has **sinned against** God suffers the consequences, Bildad said. Job’s children illustrated that fact. They died because they sinned, and now Job was dying because he sinned. Why else would Job be suffering? Bildad and his cohorts were blinded to other purposes in suffering besides retribution. Surely this cruel, heartless remark hurt Job deeply. After all, he had offered sacrifices to cover his children’s sins (1:5)” (*Bible Knowledge*).

Bildad viewed Job and his family as hypocrites, outwardly appearing holy, but evidently secretly very wicked. Some translations substitute “godless man” in place of “hypocrite.” In either case, Bildad charged Job with being “...one who only carries

the mask of godliness, to serve secular purposes, who wishes to be taken for a religionist..." (Clarke). Does anyone do that today for personal gain in business relationships, politics, social standing, etc.? Each child of God needs to inspect his mask, if he or she has one. Why do we do what we do religiously?

Bildad resorted to the wisdom of the ancients who had gone before for the basis of his theological position and accusations against Job. Bildad relied on principles assembled from the observations of uninspired men who had lived in the past. Some of those, at least, would have included men who had lived for hundreds of years as was characteristic in early Patriarchy. Uninspired truisms, combined with the human inability to be omniscient, made for poor evidence or court of opinion by which to pass judgment on Job.

"Bildad was trying to win Job back from the evil into which he had fallen" (Hailey 90). Yet, one needs to moderate his approach, realizing that the Word of God is harsh enough toward sinners, and we do not need to aggravate the situation by presenting its message in a severe manner. Instead, we must 'speak the truth in love' (Ephesians 4:15). When it may be necessary to essentially tell someone that the Bible indicates that their present conduct will lead them to a devil's Hell, he or she needs to know that just thinking about the possible loss of his or her soul breaks our hearts—because we truly care for them. Unnecessarily deriding someone will cause that one to recoil from even the truth so that it is highly unlikely that repentance will be forthcoming. He will not hear anything else we say, even from the Bible. Presentation is important!

The last verse of Bildad's present speech must have seemed somewhat prophetic once Job received the restoration of apparent good favor with God and after he regained prosperity. Bildad and the other two friends became the object of God's castigation, and Job became their redeemer.

## **Job Responds to Bildad (9:1-10:22)**

Job was confused and frustrated. From his vantage point, there was no solution to the dilemma in which he found himself—a righteous man—"blameless and upright" (Job 1:1) by God's own estimation—experiencing maximum, extensive and prolonged

suffering. Why do the righteous suffer? Like his friends and many people since that time including our contemporaries, Job attributed his suffering to the mighty hand of God. Revised, the question on Job's mind was, "Why does God cause the righteous to suffer?" The mistake that he and his friends made was the assumption that God Himself was **directly and only** responsible for Job's misfortunes—or anyone else's suffering.

Job and his friends agreed regarding the nature of omnipotent, holy God, but they disagreed about the justice of God respecting His treatment of the wicked and the godly on earth. Whereas the friends unswervingly maintained that God was correct in punishing Job for grievous sins—the only explanation consistent with their theology, Job relentlessly affirmed that God punished him despite his godliness. Job's friends viewed the suffering of Job as **proof** of their religious ideology, and Job viewed his suffering as **proof** of his contention that God acted harshly toward unrighteous and righteous souls alike. Job concluded, "It makes no difference whether a man be righteous or wicked. God treats [afflicts] them substantially alike... It means that he [God] seems to be inattentive to them; he suffers the righteous and the wicked to be swept away together as if he were regardless of character" (*Barnes' Notes*).

Recognizing the omnipotence of God, Job could only long hopelessly for a mediator to reconcile himself to God. The patriarch did not believe that he could obtain justice in a judicial proceeding against God—though he was in the right. "He knows that *he* is an upright man, and yet, the Lord has tormented him; how, therefore, could *anyone* expect a fair deal from Him?" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 39). Of course, everyone living today can have a Mediator between lowly man and Almighty God. Christians have a Defense Lawyer or Advocate—Jesus Christ, who can operate effectively in a celestial court (1 John 2:1). Christians have a Mediator who can fairly represent the interests of God and the interests of mankind (1 Timothy 2:5).

"Job's problem now is trying to understand why God, who is so great and mighty and who does marvelous things, would use His power to destroy one so small as himself" (Hailey 93). Job supposed and realized more fully later that mortal man has no leverage to subpoena God to appear in a court of justice, besides the futility of

arguing a case against God. “I cannot contend with him as with one of my fellows in a court of justice” (Clarke). How could the creation prevail in a controversy against the Creator? How can a mere man triumph in a dispute with Him Who made all that exists and by the same power causes it to continue (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3)? Such is impossible!

Thinking out loud, Job surmised that “it could not be with God a matter of personal gratification to inflict pain...” (*Barnes’ Notes*). Why, then, Job puzzled, was God persecuting Him—especially, without apprising him of how he had offended God? Job knew what the rules were for life and for religion, because God had communicated His will to the patriarchs, and Job diligently tried to comply. Sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4 KJV), and where no law has been given, there can be no sin (Romans 4:15). Therefore, Job was at a loss to know why God hated him, or so he thought. Job knew that he was as righteous as a mere mortal could be in his acknowledgement and compliance with the revealed will of God; why, then, was God punishing him? Surely, God had not made Job just for the purpose of tormenting and destroying him, Job concluded. There must be a reason. “He does not perceive the divine motive and purpose of his suffering...” (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

Jackson said of Job, “His eyes were blinded by anguish” (*Book of Job* 39). Job charged, “God destroys the good and the evil indiscriminately” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 40), so that in his mind, “there is no apparent advantage in being good over being bad” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 41). “He accused God of rank injustice” (Hailey 97). Under the hopelessness of Job’s apparently incurable, pain tortured body and tormented mind, he again turned to hoping for death to relieve him of the matter—irreversible desperation. “I have no respite in my afflictions; I suffer continually in my body, and my mind is incessantly harassed” (Clarke).

“...Job has not turned away from God; but he is struggling with his faith” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 41). Certainly, we can sympathize and many also can empathize with Job’s suffering in mind and in body.

It is worthy of notice that Job acknowledged that humans do not own anything absolutely, but everything belongs to God (Psalm 50:10-12). Therefore, man has no standing to protest to God if He were to require it of us. Job realized this respecting his possessions

as well as his children. “God has a right to remove any thing which we possess. Our friends, property, health, and lives, are his gift, and he has a right to them all. When he takes them away, he is but taking that which is his own, and which has been lent to us for a little time, and which he has a right to remove when it seems good to him” (*Barnes’ Notes*).

Note from Job 10:1 that Job recognized the distinction between the soul or spiritual side of man and the life of the body. From the earliest of times, the children of God have realized the **dual nature** of mankind. Humanity knew God and received communication or revelation from Him, but most people turned from God (Romans 1:18-32). People are still turning from God, many of whom deny the dual nature of humanity.

## Zophar Speaks Up (11:1-20)

Zophar’s speech was simply more of the same and meaner than the vocalizations of the other “friends.” “The spirit of Zophar is dogmatic, cold, heartless and unfair in its accusations” (Hailey 109). Locked on and unshakable respecting their fallacious theology, any protest by Job that he was not guilty of grievous sin deeply aggravated the three friends, leading them to amplify the intensity of their attacks on the patriarch. “Reproof is often an urgent duty. It is the hardest act of friendship, for whilst there are but few men who do not at times merit reprobation, there are fewer still who will graciously receive, or even patiently endure a reproving word...” (*Biblical Illustrator*). Especially, then, the **manner** of reproof is as important as the reproof if there is to be any hope of success in recovering a sin-infected soul (James 5:19-20). Job’s friends were ferocious and harmed their good intentions.

Like his companions, Zophar assumed Job’s guilt based on his suffering, called upon Job to repent and presumed that the reward for penitence on Job’s part would be material prosperity. “Job did not have a ‘commercial faith’ that made bargains with God” (*Bible Exposition*), but Zophar and the other two friends seemed to only visualize that kind of material relationship with God.

Neither Zophar nor his partners in miserable comfort correctly detected the cause of Job’s suffering or accurately grasped the

spiritual rather than the physical aspect of divine punishment and reward. **There may be** a physical facet to divine punishment and reward, but definitely **there is** a spiritual side to the same. While the friends were privy to many of the attributes of God and aptly defined repentance, they were ill positioned to make valid applications, particularly when it came to Job.

The severity of Zophar's tone and approach is apparent in verse 3 where he accused Job of being a liar. In truth, Zophar sometimes put words into Job's mouth (i.e., attributed to him words or meanings that he had not expressed), and then he scolded Job for them. Verse 6 adds nothing beyond insult to Job's injury by stating that God had not persecuted him nearly enough for his sinfulness. There is no compassion or friendship evident whatsoever, but only the noise of hollow, self-sanctified, misguided, pious persecution. Zophar and the other two friends appear to be unsympathetic toward Job; that should never be said of a child of God.

Job Chapter 11 concludes the first cycle of speeches. "These first speeches by Job's compatriots offered no comfort. Though their generalities about God's goodness, justice, and wisdom were true, their cruel charge for Job to repent of some hidden sin missed the mark. They failed to see that God sometimes has other reasons for human suffering" (*Bible Knowledge*).

## Job Responds Again (12:1-14:22)

Hailey summarizes preceding chapters that narrated the exchanges between Job and his so-called "friends," and then, he introduces Job's next goal.

The three friends have spoken. They have presented their view that Job's suffering is divine punishment for sins. They based their contention on dreams or visions (Eliphaz, 4:12-21), the tradition of the ancients (Bildad, 8:8-10), and dogmatic assumptions (Zophar, 11:4-6). Job challenged them to present factual evidence for their claims against him, which they failed to do. He sought to bring God to trial in the matter of his suffering without cause, but God did not respond. Job now turns from his effort to indict God to arraigning the three friends. (115)

It is difficult to approach a man effectively with counsel when he to whom one goes knows everything that the one coming to him knows. For instance, preachers or elders are often at a loss to reproach a fellow preacher or elder with applicable Scripture to a preacher's or an elder's sins. After all, the sinner on those occasions knows everything that could be said from God's Word about that, and probably has had occasion to state the same to other sinners in former times. The friends of Job had nothing new to tell Job of which he was not already aware respecting the understanding of the wise. Job's friends failed to recognize that fact, which offended Job. This led Job to respond in 12:2 with sarcasm. Clarke paraphrased Job's words: "Doubtless ye are the wisest men in the world; all wisdom is concentrated in you, and when ye die, there will no more be found on the face of the earth!" Clarke further observed, "This is a strong irony. ...All your boasted wisdom consists only in strings of proverbs which are in every person's mouth, and are no proof of wisdom and experience in them that use them." How true!

Job jeered their alleged wisdom. He sarcastically responded to Zophar's snidely calling him a stupid donkey (11:12) by saying that they thought they were so smart that when they would **die** all wisdom would be gone! Though Job was in pain, he could still think. He was **not inferior** to them (a point he repeated in 13:2); in fact what they said about God was only common knowledge. (*Bible Knowledge*)

Instead of patiently collecting and collating facts from the opened page of human history, and deducing therefrom conclusions as to the principle or principles of the Divine government, Job's friends first invented a theory, and then looked about for musty proverbs to support it. They were not philosophers or theologians at all, but simply theorists, inventors of sophisms, stitchers together of falsehoods, and fabricators of vanities (ver. 4), who had endeavoured to construct a theodicy by mingling together a little bit of fact and a large amount of fancy, or by patching together a handful of ancient platitudes. (*Pulpit Commentary*)

Rather than exhibiting genuine wisdom, Job's friends regurgitated the quaint sayings that were well known from generations now past. Job was of the opinion that those "friends" would have better demonstrated wisdom through silence. "Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding, But what is in the heart of fools is made known" (Proverbs 14:33). "A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back" (Proverbs 29:11). A contemporary homespun proverb says, "It's better to be silent and have people think you're clueless or stupid, rather than to speak and confirm it!"

The patriarch did not disagree with sound principles and valid caricatures of God, but he did protest the application made by the "friends" against him. The problem of Job's friends with its misapplication persists today among Christians, too. We need to be careful not to presume a degree of omniscience in areas where all of the facts are not clearly evident. Of course, we need to make absolutely sure that our theology is grounded in divine revelation, which the friends of Job did not do.

When a man or a woman knowledgeable of God's Word consistently ratifies true doctrine while insisting upon his or her innocence, particularly where only omniscience could validate or invalidate the claim, there should arise in the minds of the faithful a measure of doubt. Things are not always as advertised by the critics, and things are not always as they may appear. Who hasn't personally experienced this scenario even in a little way?

Job's fair-weather friends showed him no respect, but instead, they along with the general populace derided poor Job. One of the paramount failures of "the friends" was that "they could not see suffering through the eyes of a sufferer" (Hailey 116). Bad theology, misapplication of truisms and lack of sympathy severely undercut the badge of friendship those empty counselors purported to exercise toward Job. Not all *friends* are created equally! "Wealth makes many friends, But the poor is separated from his friend" (Proverbs 19:4). "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). "All the brothers of the poor hate him; How much more do his friends go far from him! He may pursue them with words, yet they abandon him" (Proverbs 19:7).

*Axioms* are truths that generally apply, though they may not always apply in every situation. For instance, the concept of *cause and effect* is a self-evident truth, similar in sentiment to the biblical statements: “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (Galatians 6:7-8). The “three friends,” like some Christians today, affirmed that there were no exceptions, whereas “Job saw himself as an exception...” (Hailey 124). In the case of Job, who was right? As a consequence, Job “...had lost confidence in his friends but not in God” (Hailey 126).

Interestingly, both Zophar and Job desired God to answer. The former thought that God would wise up Job respecting true wisdom, and Job essentially wanted his day in court before God. While both of them were later disappointed when God finally did speak, the friends were more surprised at what God had to say than was Job, ultimately.

Feeling a permeating sense of hopelessness, Job turned to ponder the brevity of life, after which death follows. Job 14:1-2 (cf., James 4:14) probably graces nearly every funeral sermon because it so picturesquely illustrates how little time compared to eternity humans experience on earth. Therefore, due to the brevity of life, as well as its fragility, especially each child of God needs to live the Gospel and infect others with it while there is yet time (Ecclesiastes 9:10; John 9:4). As the apostle to the Gentiles wrote, we must redeem or ransom back time past ill-used while we still can (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5). We need to prepare **now** to meet God (Amos 4:12).

Finally, Job longed for rest from the burdens of this life. A righteous death does provide temporary rest (Luke 16:19-31) as a precursor to the eternal rest into which we long to go (Hebrews 4:9-11). Job was on an emotional rollercoaster of despair, a glimmer of hope and more despair.

# Chapter 5: The Second Cycle of Speeches (Job 15-21)

## Eliphaz Begins this Series of Discourses (15:1-35)

“In this second round of debate between Job and his friends, the antagonism intensifies; sparks fly! …Since Job will not confess his sins, Eliphaz will fill in the blanks for him!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 47). Eliphaz and his cohorts were confident “that uncommon calamities were proof of uncommon guilt” (*Barnes*). “Instead of showing the kind friendly, and forbearing attitude displayed in his first speech, he [Eliphaz] now manifested a harsh and severe mood toward Job” (Hailey 139). Indirect accusations formerly hurled at Job were now replaced with hostile missiles of stinging denunciation. We might say that the *so-called friends* had become decidedly nasty in their treatment of their *supposed friend*.

Not only were the friends misguided on so many planes in their attacks on Job, attitudes toward their friend greatly deteriorated, too. If the friends had been correct in their assessment of Job’s predicament—that it was solely the result of Job’s impenitence, they still nullified their efforts to restore Job by badmouthing him. The three friends lost their influence for good with Job by berating him. A lesson for us today would be that though we ought to stand firm in the defense of the Gospel (Philippians 1:17), and we need to be proactive in attempting to rescue fallen brethren (James 5:19-20), we need to stick with the known facts and avoid disparaging the character and motives of the person. We must be careful not to tread in an area that would require of us omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:11), and certainly, though we ought to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:16-20), we are not permitted to pass final judgment on anyone (James 4:11-12).

After we have essentially told someone that we hold them in an esteem a little less than pond scum, nothing else that comes forth from our mouths will carry any credibility with one we are purportedly trying to help spiritually. Eliphaz, wrote Homer Hailey, used “sarcasm” and exhibited “a condescending spirit” (141-142). Amusingly but appropriately, the *Bible Exposition Commentary* observed: “...Eliphaz turned on the sarcasm, another proof that he has **run out of something intelligent to say**” (emphasis added). That simply will not do in interpersonal relationships, especially between children of God, and especially if the genuine hope is to restore a fallen child of God.

The former speech and this sermon of Eliphaz complement each other. He resorted to the backdrop of human experience and essentially equated that subjectivity with the wisdom of God. Eliphaz perceived of himself and the other two antagonists as messengers of God, howbeit, they were not armed with a message from God.

In his first speech, Eliphaz had described the blessings of the godly man (5:17-26); but now he describes the sufferings of the ungodly man. Eliphaz was careful to remind Job that these were not his ideas alone, but that the ancients all agreed with him. If Job rejected what Eliphaz said, he was turning his back on the wisdom of their fathers. Eliphaz was a man who found great strength in tradition...  
*(Bible Exposition)*

The misguided theology of the three friends had not changed; only the intensity of their brash treatment of Job was ratcheted up a few more notches.

In this second round of the friends’ speeches we meet with no new thoughts whatever; only “in the second circle of the dispute everything is more fiery than in the first” (Oetinger): the only new thing is the harsher and more decided tone of their maintenance of the doctrine of punishment, with which they confront Job. They cannot go beyond the narrow limits of their dogma of retribution...  
*(Keil & Delitzsch).*

The problem with Eliphaz's statement about the judgment of the wicked is that it is not always true in this life. Many wicked people go through life apparently happy and successful, while many godly people experience suffering and seeming failure. It is true that ultimately the wicked suffer and the godly are blessed; but, meanwhile, it often looks like the situation is reversed (Ps 73; Jer 12:1-4). Furthermore, God gives sunshine to the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45). He is long-suffering toward sinners (2 Peter 3:9) and waits for His goodness to lead them to repentance (Rom 2:4; Luke 15:17-19). (*Bible Exposition*)

Despite his detractors and the efforts of Satan to destroy him, Job had a Protector. Adam Clarke made this wonderful observation.

Poor Job! what a fight of affliction had he to contend with! His body wasted and tortured with sore disease, his mind harassed by Satan; and his heart wrung with the unkindness, and false accusations of his friends. No wonder he was greatly agitated, often distracted, and sometimes even thrown off his guard. However, all his enemies were chained; and beyond that chain they could not go. God was his unseen Protector, and did not suffer his faithful servant to be greatly moved. (Job 15:35)

## Job Responds for the Fourth Time (16:1-17:16)

"Job's friends still had not identified with his situation; they did not feel his agony or understand his perplexity" (*Bible Exposition*). **Same old, same old!** Job designated the words of Eliphaz as merely repetitions of what the friends had been spouting against him all along. Job made counter accusations toward his critics respecting their disposition to accuse him falsely. The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* boldly remarked of Eliphaz: "This **friend-turned-enemy** hoped to force Job to repent of his terrible ways" (Job 15:21-26 emphasis added). The three detractors had become the reverse of what friendship would require by simple definition—"my mockers-my friends" (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*).

Though Job acknowledged the general validity that one reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7), he presented himself as an exception to that principle. We, likewise, need to handle aright the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15 ASV) and refrain from applying even biblical axioms as though no exceptions are possible (Proverbs 22:6).

We don't want to be "miserable comforters," definitely an earned designation that Job attributed to his *friends*. The effect of Job's "comforters" was only "to deepen his distress" (*Barnes*). "Eliphaz became Job's prosecutor, not his consoler" (*Bible Knowledge*). His speeches and those of the other two accomplices 'wounded instead of soothed' the poor patriarch (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

Job proclaimed that had his friends been in his position instead of him that he actually would have been a comforter to them. We, too, should lift the burdens of the downtrodden rather than adding to their misery.

After giving little notice to Eliphaz's most recent rant, Job returned to complaining to God about God's mistreatment of him. "...Job severely charged God with being his enemy... He tore him as a predatory animal would seize its prey..." (Hailey 151). In 16:14, Job compared the onslaught of God against him to the siege of a metropolis whereupon one defensive wall after another is breached until the city falls. Job failed to understand why God was treating him so severely, particularly since Job had humbled himself by donning sackcloth and putting dust upon his head, he cried without ceasing. His pleas to God were sincere and pitiable.

Job did not expect to survive, but he was certain that he was about to die without exoneration. He resigned himself to vindication after his passing. Job was completely enveloped in hopelessness and tormented unrelentingly by his supposed friends, beyond the painful memories of his family losses to death, his abject poverty and his ever-present physical traumas. Accusatory toward God on one hand, Job resigned himself to God for the pardon of a righteous man. Like the blood of Abel that cried from the ground (Genesis 4:10; cf. Ezekiel 24:8), Job contended that his innocent blood would continue to cry for justice even after death. Fortunately for Christians, we have a divine defense attorney.

The Christian believer has this heavenly Advocate in Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1-2). As our interceding High Priest, Christ gives us the conquering grace we need when we are tempted and tested (Heb 2:17-18; 4:14-16). If we fail, then He is our Advocate to forgive us and restore us when we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:5-2:2). (*Bible Exposition*)

Amidst Job's confusion about the relationship of his ordeal to God, Job both accused God of mistreating him, **and** Job also looked to God as the only One to whom he could turn for vindication. Job could not harmonize these two approaches to God, and so he simply launched forward helplessly anyway with unbreakable allegiance to his God.

Therefore, in the very God who appears to him to be a blood-thirsty enemy in pursuit of him, Job nevertheless hopes to find a witness of his innocence: He will acknowledge his blood, like that of Abel, to be the blood of an innocent man. It is an inward irresistible demand made by his faith which here brings together two opposite principles—principles which the understanding cannot unite—with bewildering boldness. Job believes that God will even finally avenge the blood which His wrath has shed, as blood that has been innocently shed. (*Keil & Delitzsch*)

In the meantime, Job had become a byword and an object of physical and physiological abuse. “My afflictions and calamities have become a subject of general conversation, so that my poverty and affliction are proverbial” (Clarke). Certainly, Job imagines, at least the torment of his physical body as well as the verbal and mental battery he endured would soon be arrested by reason of his inevitable, shortly to occur death. Until then, though, he appeared to be nothing but skin and bones—a skeleton over which was stretched a thin, sorely blemished sheet of skin. ***He surely thought that he had one foot in the grave already!***

Job imagined that righteous people would be amazed that godly persons might be permitted to suffer as intensely as he had suffered. Job and we today still ponder the question of why bad things happen

to good people. The suffering of Job proves that the theory which supposes that God only and always punishes bad people, and that good people will always enjoy material prosperity, good health and happiness is not so. God may chastise His children, but suffering may result from other sources besides God. For instance, one may suffer as the consequence of someone else's sins (e.g., drunk driver, robber, murderer).

Once Job was proven to be righteous, even if it occurred after his death, then other righteous souls could take courage when they, too, experienced unexplained turmoil and difficulty in life. "The pious shall take fresh courage to persevere from the example of suffering Job. The image is from a warrior acquiring new courage in action (Isa 40:30-31; Phil 1:14)" (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*). Herein, we have the reason for which the Book of Job was written and included in the sacred canon of Holy Scriptures (Romans 15:4). "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11 KJV).

Job could come to no other conclusion given his present status than that his goals and purposes that he desired to transpire throughout his life would not come to pass. Anyone without purpose in his or her life, or whose aspirations have been crushed beyond resurgence, despairs greatly. If only one can imagine a legacy continuing after him, then he can more calmly and resolutely accept his passing away.

Job perceived that he was 'rejected by his fellow men as well as by God' (*Keil & Delitzsch*), and therefore, there was no one else to whom he could appeal. How dejected and lonely he was!

## Bildad Takes His Turn (18:1-21)

Homer Hailey wrote that Bildad was "incensed at Job" (163). "Bildad berated" Job (*Bible Knowledge*). He assessed Job's situation and declared that it was simply the result of the hidden snares of wickedness. In other words, "his hardships were the results of his sins" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 49).

The ultimate sequence of the series of sufferings through which Job went and the final episode for Job was predictably "the king of

terrors” (Job 18:14). “Here death is called the king of terrors, but *Christ came to remedy that problem!*” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 50).

For the ancients, one thing was even worse than death—“His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street” (Job 18:17). Bildad goaded Job in all of his misery by calling to Job’s memory that his children were dead and that he would have no one after him to carry on the family name. “Among the worst things that could happen to an ancient Semite (Hebrew especially) was having no descendants. ...This was the equivalent to liquidation of the person” (Hailey 167). “Not the evil-doer’s family alone is rooted out, but also his memory” (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

Everything that Bildad, as well as the two other friends, had expounded to Job was the product of erroneous theology—a “conclusion based on the assumption that all suffering is punishment for wrong doing...” (Hailey 168). Contrary to what the “friends” believed, Job was not a prime example of what happens to wicked people, but instead, Job is the primary specimen by which the sufferers in all ages dare have any hope (cf. *Keil & Delitzsch*).

## Job Answers (19:1-29)

“In this chapter Job’s spirit sinks to a level that is probably the lowest in the entire book” (Hailey 169). Using the figure of speech “ten times,” Job declared that his supposed friends had completely and thoroughly thrashed him with words, and still they would not stop.

Our words either hurt others or heal them; we either add to their burdens or help them bear their burdens with courage. Job’s friends crushed him with their words; they made him feel worthless and helpless in the face of all his suffering. How sensitive we should be to the needs and struggles of others! Even if people do need rebuke, we should do it in love; and our words should hearten them and not weaken them” (*Bible Exposition*).

In all of their words against him, they were only words, since they could not prove their accusations against him. In verse 7, Job continued to affirm his innocence and that he had been wrongly

treated by the false comforters and also wrongly tormented by God. “Both Bildad and Job believed that Job’s hardships were from God, but here is the difference. The former declared that it was due to Job’s sinfulness, while the latter contended it was the result of God’s injustice. *Both were absolutely wrong!*” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 51).

Job’s hurt was magnified additionally in that his wife, siblings, young people, friends and even his servants ignored him. He observed that he was no more than skin and bones, or aptly Job looked like *death warmed over*; it couldn’t be long until death overtook him. In verse 21, the patriarch desperately begged for pity, but none was forthcoming from any source.

Next, no less confident of his innocence, Job desired that his case be penned in a book, or even more indelibly recorded with lead in stone. He thought that sometime after his demise, posthumously he would be exonerated. Job mentioned a redeemer who he said would come to the earth at a later time. Just what Job may have known regarding what we today ascribe to the Christ it is difficult to know, or he may have referred instead to a kinsman whose responsibility was to clear his name if that were possible.

Death, he sensed was not far away from him, but Job entertained a glimmer of hope that after death he would see God. “...Job clearly expressed his belief in conscious personality beyond death; that he would see God...” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 52).

Finally, Job closed this rebuttal with a warning to his critical friends. Their demeanor toward him was unjustified, and it warranted divine rebuke in judgment.

## Zophar’s Retort (20:1-29)

“Zophar professes astonishment that Job required to be instructed on so obvious a point as the Divine law of retribution... With ill-concealed gusto Zophar repeats the popular dogma of the day...” (*Pulpit Commentary*). Not the least bit removed from the faulty philosophy upon which the three friends have been operating in their abuse of Job, Zophar launched out still again against Job. Zophar could not contain himself, and he was reacting to Job’s speeches. “The insinuation that the three friends, and not Job, were guilty and stood in danger of God’s judgment aroused within him a

quick indignant response” (Hailey 179). Zophar retorted that instead of the judgment of God ultimately falling upon the “friends,” it was rather Job upon whom God’s judgment would come.

It has already been observed that Zophar was the most inveterate of all Job’s enemies, for **we really must cease to call them friends**. He sets no bounds to his invective, and outrages every rule of charity. A man of such a bitter spirit must have been, in general, very unhappy. With him Job is, by insinuation, everything that is base, vile, and hypocritical. (Clarke emphasis added)

This wayward spirit can be seen in Christians as well who appear to have been born in the *objective mood and in the kickative case*. While it is appropriate to be *fruit inspectors* (Matthew 7:15-20)—judging righteously (John 7:24)—some Christians only see the wrong, sometimes peering so intently upon benign things that they find the wrong there, too. Such is a gut-wrenching, physically, emotionally and spiritually hurtful thinking and a way of life. No one is afforded the benefit of the doubt or viewed as innocent until proven guilty, but even every fellow Christian is viewed as evil until proven acceptable. Instead, faithful Christians are called upon in Scripture to ‘speak the truth in love’ (Ephesians 4:15). Otherwise, Christians are miserable and unhappy, and they who are such have a tendency to make everyone else miserable also.

Zophar portrayed Job as evidently wicked and as a hypocrite for appearing to be righteous and for maintaining his innocence. To him, the terrible conditions that had befallen Job were all of the evidence needed to confirm the gross unrighteousness of Job. It was obvious to Zophar Job was merely experiencing the consequence of his sins; some of the physical diseases were the result of the sins of his youth, whereas other tragedies in Job’s life were directly the explicit punishments from God. Zophar was “cold, cruel, and heartless. ...Zophar saw God as a God of vengeance who exercises His wrath against the wicked man in a fierce and final manner. There is not a flicker of love, mercy, or compassion...” (Hailey 186) in either Zophar’s speech or Zophar’s concept of God. Though men today often minimize the judgmental aspect of God and overemphasize the love of God, Almighty God is both a God of

righteous indignation toward the wicked (Psalm 78:49; Romans 2:8; Hebrews 10:27) and a loving God toward the obedient (1 John 4:16).

The speech of Zophar, ch. 20, is his ultimatum, for in the third course of the controversy he takes no part. We have already seen from his first speech, ch. 11, that he is the most impassioned of the friends. His vehemence is now the less excusable, since Job in his previous speech has used the truly spiritual language of importunate entreaty and earnest warning in reply to the friends. The friends would now have done well if they had been silent, and still better if they had recognised in the sufferer the tried and buffeted servant of God, and had withdrawn their charges, which his innermost nature repudiates. But Zophar is not disposed to allow the reproach of the correction which they received to rest upon him; in him we have an illustration of the fact that a man is never more eloquent than when he has to defend his injured honour...

It has been rightly remarked, that in Zophar... described to us one of those hot-heads who pretend to fight for religion that is imperilled, while they are zealous for their own wounded vanity. ...He has nothing new to bring forward in reply to Job; ...For they are completely spent in their one dogma... All that is new in the speech of Zophar, and in those of the friends generally, in this second course of the controversy, is, that they no longer try to lure Job on to penitence by promises, but endeavour to bring him to a right state of mind, or rather to weaken his supposedly-mad assault upon themselves, by presenting to him only the most terrible images. (*Keil & Delitzsch*).

Zophar made a lot of noise, essentially, with which he purposed to frighten Job if he could. "...Zophar does not affix any very distinct meaning to his threats. He is content to utter a series of fierce-sounding but vague menaces, which he knows that Job will regard as launched against himself, and does not care whether they are taken metaphorically or literally" (*Pulpit Commentary*).

## Job's Reply to Zophar (21:1-34)

Job promptly replies, during which he both indicts his counselors as well as God. From his vantage, God is as likely to punish the righteous and ignore rebuff of the wicked as He is to reward the godly and punish the ungodly. Job sees God as indiscriminate in His treatment of humanity. Further, Job called his enemy-like friends ‘mockers,’ and he directly charged them as adamantly as before for babbling falsehoods against him. Job continued to defend himself against baseless and hurtful accusations from those who claimed to be his friends. “Look, I know your thoughts, And the schemes with which you would wrong me” (Job 21:27).

Since God sends rain and sunshine on the just and the unjust in his general providence (Matthew 5:45), and because these days God chiefly reserves punishment for the end of time (2 Peter 3:7), present prosperity or the lack thereof cannot be viewed as an adequate determination of God’s approval or disapproval of someone. “Job contends that there is no *generalization* that can be made regarding the temporal punishment of the wicked” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 55).

For two reasons, the friends’ arguments had made no impression on Job. *First*, he was not guilty of the secret sins for which the friends supposed that God was persecuting Job. *Second*, the arguments of the friends clearly were false, because wicked people often do prosper. Therefore, God does not always punish the wicked with adversity. Certainly, had any of the “friends” suffered setbacks even in a small way comparable to what Job had endured, he, too, would have quickly acknowledged the fallacious proposition that adversity would never come to the righteous.

# **Chapter 6: The Third Cycle of Speeches (Job 22-31)**

In the first cycle of speeches the friends made their plea to Job on the basis of the general view of God – His goodness, justice, and omnipotent insight in all things. In the second cycle they emphasized the characteristics of the wicked and the retribution that befalls them. Both approaches had failed to melt what they considered to be Job's obstinate persistence. They had exhausted these two lines of reasoning; Job brushed them aside, continuing to defend his innocence and charging God with injustice. In the third cycle Eliphaz made a direct attack, charging Job with specific sins. Bildad added nothing new to their arguments, and Zophar did not respond at all. (Hailey 197)

“Zophar, in a concession of defeat, fails to come forward” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 57).

## **Eliphaz Speaks (22:1-30)**

Eliphaz began with generalization that Job's wickedness was great, fueled by an infinite number of sins (verse 5). Adam Clarke noted of Eliphaz's complaint toward Job, “Thy sins are not only many, but they are great; and of thy continuance in them there is no end.” Next, Eliphaz accused Job of several specific sins, which if he would repent of them, then according to Eliphaz, God would restore great prosperity (i.e., “gold as dust,” “plenty of silver”) to Job. Eliphaz said that Job was guilty of the type of sins to which Jesus referred when talking about the Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. While the warning was valid generally, it was misplaced in application to Job.

...he made unfounded charges on the assumed premise that all suffering was punishment for wrong doing. Job was a great sufferer, therefore a great sinner. It appears that he [Eliphaz] fell into the fault of many: if one fails to meet the facts of truth and argument, leave these and attack the person, manufacture charges. (Hailey 197)

“Eliphaz offered no evidence to prove his charges; only a conclusion that was based on his theology” (Hailey 201). Even the baseless charges by esteemed men today can severely mar the reputation of otherwise faithful children of God; we need to be careful.

The line of reasoning that Eliphaz employed was thus. “If it is a self-contradiction that God should chastise a man because he fears Him, there must be sin on the side of Job; and indeed, since the nature of the sin is to be measured according to the nature of the suffering, great and measureless sin” (*Keil & Delitzsch*). The premise, though, is false because not all suffering comes forth from God (e.g., consequence of the sins of others). Therefore, the conclusions likewise were unreliable.

Eliphaz categorized the sins of Job to be comparable to the sins characteristic of sinners who perished in the flood of Noah’s day (verses 15-16). This gives us some sense of the relative period of the writing of the Book of Job—during patriarchy after the universal flood. One also notes the degree of depravity with which Eliphaz charged Job, so hideous that God once destroyed nearly every human for that degree of sinfulness.

Once more, we see the material side only with no consideration of the spiritual arena in the friends’ theology of reward and punishment respecting sin. “Eliphaz still seems to be thinking about material profit and loss” (Hailey 198). Any concept of God and God-authored religion that does not entertain the spiritual relationship between God and man is defective in this regard, too.

As observed before herein, the manner in which even the child of God with the best of intentions approaches an erring soul matters greatly respecting the likelihood of persuading a sinner to repent. “But such vicious accusations would hardly be likely to bring anyone to repentance” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 58).

“...[I]n Eliphaz’s mind Job was at war with God” (Hailey 204). However, instead, Eliphaz would have done better to realize that “[h]uman traditions are not to be confused with the word of God” (Hailey 204). There are a few areas in which ‘human traditions’ even today have been elevated incorrectly to doctrinal considerations (e.g., number of communion cups, order of worship activities, whether the preacher has facial hair, jacket and tie to serve the Lord’s Supper, etc.).

## Job’s Response (23:1-24:25)

Job “derived neither conviction nor consolation from his friends” (Clarke). He responded, ignoring what Eliphaz had to say, by lamenting his inability to search out God to argue his case before Him. Still, Job affirmed his loyalty to God and that he had not violated the known will of God. Once more, Job decried the inequity he perceived on God’s part for not punishing the wicked, and yet, afflicting him. “At this point Job does not reply to the specific indictments that have been leveled against him; rather, he is preoccupied with the apparent injustice of God’s providential workings...” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 58-59). “Unable to convince men of his just cause, Job yearned for the opportunity to present his case before God in an impartial trial” (Hailey 207).

Instead of arguing with his friends, or compromising his integrity by giving in to Eliphaz’s appeal, Job ignores them completely and speaks to and about the Lord. Job has already made it clear that his dispute was not with men but with God, and he emphasizes this fact in his speech. (*Bible Exposition*)

“Unlike the friends who spoke from tradition, Job spoke from observation—facts of life” (Hailey 220). Job enumerated the sins of wicked men that were commonly observable in his day around him, but he objected to (1) being classified as one of them, and (2) God not reproofing them in this life, but permitting them to go on with an apparent immunity from divine chastisement. Again, he pondered as do we sometimes: “Why do bad things happen to good people, and why do good things happen to bad people?” The world thinks that

Christians are dopes when we obey laws and do not run to the same excess with them (1 Peter 4:4).

Poor Job had no way of knowing what had transpired behind the scenes, hidden from mere mortals, which resulted in his suffering. Yet, Job was confident that at least when he managed to have his audience with God that he would understand. Job trusted in God despite not knowing the “*why*” for the great tragedies that he had experienced and the ongoing suffering that he endured. Doesn’t that remind us of the hymn, which in part says,

Tempted and tried, we’re oft made to wonder  
Why it should be thus all the day long;  
While there are others living about us,  
Never molested, though in the wrong.

*Refrain:*

Farther along we’ll know more about it,  
Farther along we’ll understand why;  
Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine,  
We’ll understand it all by and by.

“Since Job reached the conclusion that God was his witness in heaven (16:19), and his redeemer whom he would find on his side (19:25-27), he had faced his problems from a different perspective” (Hailey 208). We who are faithful Christians, too, ought to meet the problems and adversities of life differently than do non-Christians and ungodly people. “Although Eliphaz charged him with denying the omniscience of God (22:1-14), Job reaffirmed his confidence that God knew the direction of his life in all its ways” (Hailey 209). God knows the “secrets” of a man, who is unrighteous and who is righteousness (Psalm 44:21; Ecclesiastes 12:14).

## Bildad’s Third and Final Speech (25:1-6)

Bildad attempted to disarm Job’s stated desire to appear before God for acquittal by belittling humanity as too inferior to stand in the presence of God. “Bildad sought to humiliate Job, to awaken him to his own unworthiness” (*Bible Knowledge*). Of course, his indictment toward Job as severely cut back on himself, his friends and every other mortal, too. Anything that proves too much doesn’t

prove anything at all. Other than the one point Bildad uttered, he seemed to be at a loss for words finally.

Lest anyone attempt to capitalize on Bildad's statement as the basis for claiming original sin or hereditary depravity, be it remembered that the speeches of Job's supposed friends are not inspired. Further, those discourses are riddled with errors. In addition, children are clearly born without sin (Ezekiel 18:20) and little children do not have sin attributed to them yet, either (Matthew 18:3; 19:14).

When Bildad asked "How can a man be justified with God?" he supposed that he had posed a rhetorical question, to which the implied answer would be, "One cannot be justified before God." In truth, the Old Testament typified and shadowed the reality of justification before God through a perfect, sacrificed Savior—Jesus Christ. Through the redeeming sacrifice of the sinless Son of God, which we imitate in baptism (Romans 6:3-5), otherwise obeying our Lord (Hebrews 5:8-9), and in conjunction with the grace (Ephesians 2:8) and the mercy (Titus 3:5) of God, we can be saved from our sins. Consequently, we can boldly appear before our God (Hebrews 4:16).

Thus endeth Bildad the Shuhite, who endeavoured to speak on a subject which he did not understand; and, having gotten on bad ground, was soon confounded in his own mind, spoke incoherently, argued inconclusively, and came abruptly and suddenly to an end. Thus, his three friends being confounded, Job was left to pursue his own way; they trouble him no more; and he proceeds in triumph to the end of the 31st chapter. (Clarke)

What can we learn from the failed efforts of the three friends to counsel Job?

A review of the speeches of Job's associates shows that they were poor counselors. They failed in several ways: (1) They did not express any sympathy for Job in their speeches. (2) They did not pray for him. (3) They seemingly ignored Job's expressions of emotional and physical agony. (4) They talked too much and did not seem to listen adequately to their advice. (5) They became

defensive and argumentative. (6) They belittled rather than encouraged Job. (7) They assumed they knew the cause of Job's problems. (8) They stubbornly persisted in their views of Job's problem, even when their ideas contradicted the facts. (9) They suggested an inappropriate solution to his problem. (10) They blamed Job and condemned him for expressing grief and frustration. Counselors today do well to be sure they do not fail in similar ways. (*Bible Knowledge*)

## Job Speaks (26:1-31:40)

In *Chapter 26*, Job reduced the words of Bildad to useless chatter, having accomplished nothing and lacking any quality of counsel. In *Chapter 27*, Job accused God of having afflicted him, and yet, Job avowed not to depart from Him, but instead maintain his righteousness as long as he lived. Unlike the wicked who could never appeal to God for rescue, Job was determined to remain faithful to the Almighty. “I stand firmly on this ground; I have endeavoured to live an upright life, and my afflictions are not the consequence of my sins” (Clarke).

In *Chapter 28*, Job decided to side with the wisdom that only God knows. “The wisdom whereof Job speaks is that wisdom by which God rules His world; He alone knows its secrets and laws, both of the physical or material world (vv. 23-27) and the spiritual or moral world (v. 28). He alone knows the place where wisdom is found. Only God comprehends...” (Hailey 246). Incidentally, Job evidenced abundant knowledge of mining, smelting and metal working, which men have known from the earliest history of humanity (Hailey 242). The contrast between human wisdom and divine wisdom was also the subject of the apostle Paul’s writing in 1 Corinthians 1:18-21.

In *Chapter 29*, Job remembered the former days of his comfortable living, his esteem among men and his righteous works; he longed for those days. “...Job recalls ‘the good ole days’” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 63) or was struck with “nostalgia” (Hailey 250).

**Chapter 30** finds Job lamenting that those pleasant former times were replaced with derision directed toward him by the “children of fools” and the “children of base men”; he had become a “byword” thrust out of the mouths of the lowest specimens of humanity. Even the “rabble... stood aloof from him as if he were beneath them” (Hailey 257). Young people toyed with and abused poor Job. Aside from rudeness and poor upbringing, for youth to mistreat an older person in antiquity or even in Asia today is a severe breach of cultural conduct.

The patriarch, then, turned to noting his wretched physical condition. However, the greatest injury Job felt was his perception that he had been abandoned by God; our Lord on the cross sensed the agony of being without fellowship with the Father (Matthew 27:46), and the wicked will be punished, in part, without the presence of God eternally (2 Thessalonians 1:9). “He has been mistreated by both man and God” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 63), he thought. In **Chapter 31**, Job listed his godly characteristics and actions, whereupon he was confident that given the opportunity in a trial before God that he would be vindicated as righteous.

“In remarkable contrast to Bildad’s brief reply, Job’s response is a grand climax (chapters 26-31) to all three of his critical companions...” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 61). “Job’s friends had tried to persuade him to confess to sins of which he was not guilty, but this he would not do for such would be hypocrisy and wickedness, and God will deal with the wicked!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 62). Still, “Job believed that he was the victim of a miscarriage of justice...” (Hailey 239). “Though Job has wondered why the innocent suffer, and why wicked men go on prospering at length, he has nonetheless believed that the godless would eventually get their just desserts” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 62). “Unlike Adam who sought to hide himself and his shame, Job in his innocence would come near to God in the dignity of a prince” (Hailey 273).

# **Chapter 7: Elihu's Presentation (Job 32-37)**

Elihu was an observer, as many others also may have been, while the discourses between the *three friends* and Job occurred. “Before Elihu actually began his argument against Job (starting in 33:1) he first took a number of sentences to justify his right to speak” (*Bible Knowledge*). However, because he was much younger than the speakers, he had said nothing until all of them had exhausted their words in the several speeches that they had made. Still today, eastern and Asian cultures procure for the aged in the face of younger ones a respect and reverence for older ones. However, sometimes even today, the aged will demand for themselves this cultural respect when, in fact, unfolding circumstances, actions or words do not warrant it. For instance, in a foreign Bible school as a part of teaching and repetition of information in lessons, I divided the class down the middle into two teams for a *friendly* competition in fielding questions. To a large part due to how the class seated itself, one team was older and one team was decidedly younger. Some of the older ones became angry when the younger team won! They were angry, not because they happened to answer fewer questions or didn’t answer more questions correctly, but they were incensed because younger ones won, thereby not demonstrating, in their minds, proper respect for the aged. Perhaps we can appreciate better Elihu’s reluctance to speak up sooner than he did. “It would have been a terrible breach of etiquette had Elihu interrupted his elders” (*Bible Exposition*).

Elihu uttered complaints against all parties—the three friends as well as Job, too. He faulted Job for accusing God of injustice, and Elihu seemed to believe that the sufferings through which Job had gone were indicative of divine punishment upon him for sins in his life. He appeared to sympathize with the misguided theology of Job’s friends and even some people today. Jackson distinguishes the

approach of the friends from Elihu, thus. “Job’s three friends contended that suffering was a *punishment for sins*, while Elihu argues that suffering may be *disciplinary, and so serve to prevent sin*” (*Book of Job* 71). “Job’s friends had argued that his suffering was evidence that God was punishing him for his sins, but Elihu now argues that sometimes God permits us to suffer to keep us from sin. In other words, suffering may be preventive and not punitive” (*Bible Exposition*). Homer Hailey suggests that Elihu’s intent “was not trying to condemn Job, but to justify him. ...He would be fair, for his desire was to measure Job accurately by a just standard that he may see him justified” (275, 289).

In addition, Elihu shared Job’s belief that God was angry with Job; however, Job did not know why that would be, even if the other four speakers attributed it to Job’s supposed *secret sins*. Elihu accused Job of claiming sinless perfection, which is an overstatement.

Elihu was correct in chiding Job for rebelliously (a) questioning God’s justice (34:17), and (b) demanding that God answer Him (v. 29) and show him where he had sinned (v. 32). But Elihu seemed to share something of the heartless attitude of the three elder counselors by wishing that Job would be tested “to the utmost,” and by assuming that Job’s many words (cf. 35:16) meant he was **against God**. (*Bible Knowledge*)

Elihu condemned the three friends for not succeeding in their attempts to bring Job to repentance. In particular, he was “incensed with Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad ‘because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him’” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 69). ”

Elihu was inflamed with **the three... because** they pronounced **Job** guilty but without adequate evidence. Anger seemed to characterize much of these verbal bouts. The three pugilists were mad at Job; he was mad at them and at God; and he sensed that God was angry with him. And now Elihu was infuriated too! (*Bible Knowledge*)

Elihu stated that neither the friends of Job nor Job, despite their many years, exhibited the wisdom that one would have expected from their decades of experience. Unfortunately, long life alone does not guarantee the accumulation of knowledge and wisdom.

Certainly, we can identify with Job and dispel the false accusations of his friends.

The three counselors had claimed that Job was suffering because he was sinning, but Elihu explained that he was sinning because he was suffering! His suffering led to an attitude of pride before God and a questioning of God's ways. The triad diagnosis pertained to sinful actions in Job's past experience, whereas Elihu's diagnosis dealt with sinful attitudes in Job' present life. (Zuck qtd. in Jackson, *Book of Job* 69)

Elihu envisioned himself as a messenger from God, whose task it was to set everyone else straight with God; commentators differ as to whether he was inspired or simply had not said anything worthy of public rebuke by God. Like the friends and Job, too, Elihu also proceeded to enumerate the incomparable qualities and characteristics of God. This latter speaker provided an interlude between the former discourses and God speaking—to the surprise and somewhat to the disappointment of all present. “The position of Elihu is clearly closer to the truth... for when Jehovah later rebuked them there was no rebuff of Elihu” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 70).

Elihu was horrified at one of the conclusions to which Job had arrived and spoken aloud. “...Elihu will come to the defense of God's justice; it is unthinkable that the Almighty could do wrong” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 71). “From Elihu's viewpoint, Job's statements and charges left God in an unfavorable light” (Hailey 293).

All four of Job's critics were harsh in their approach. “If any criticism needs to be offered of Elihu's speech, it is that he saw God's mighty power exercised in cold justice apart from any feeling of love, compassion, or tenderness” (Hailey 296). God, though, is also a God of love. “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). We, likewise, need to demonstrate love, compassion and tenderness toward others,

especially toward those we attempt to guide back to the ‘narrow way’ (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; Matthew 7:14). Contrasted to the approach of the three friends toward Job, Elihu, however, displayed a more admirable deportment in his speech toward the friends and toward Job.

Calm and candid reasoning in a kindly spirit is more likely to win men to a right state of mind than dealing with a “heavy hand” (Job 33:3,7). The minister, while addressing sinners authoritatively, as “in God’s stead” (Job 33:6), and “in Christ’s stead” (2 Cor 5:20), should speak with a fellow-feeling, as Elihu, “I also am formed out of the clay:” or as Peter to Cornelius, “I myself also am a man.” ‘Terror’ only hardens it: it is love alone that melts it (Job 33:7). (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*)

There are lessons for us from these recent chapters, and after all, the Bible is most meaningful to us when we make application of it to our lives. “If men would spend more time reflecting upon the marvelous majesty of our great Creator, they would be considerably less preoccupied with wallowing in their own self-pity!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 74). Furthermore, “God is under no obligation to give account for His ways, nor to answer questions that pertain to the divine government and ways that pertain to His actions and will” (Hailey 284). We can further comfort ourselves irrespective of what physical peril or spiritual duress in which we may find ourselves by trusting in our omnipotent and benevolent Creator. Even when we may find ourselves maligned, when our good is evil spoken of (Isaiah 5:20; 1 Peter 4:14; 2 Peter 2:2), our God in “His infinite intellect and insight – enables Him to see the right or wrong of any situation and to judge impartially” (Hailey 310). “A believer’s unmerited tragedy may never be fully understood. Yet he can realize that God is in charge, that God still loves him and cares for him. This is what Job learned” (*Bible Knowledge*).

Enlightenment comes through a number of different venues. Job, for instance, learned about the fallacious nature of the three friends’ corrupted theology only by personal observation through his much suffering. “Having previously held the position of the friends that all suffering was punishment for sins, from his own

life's experiences he now realized that this view was false" (Hailey 328). Another lesson learned is that Satan is powerless over us as long as we do not allow him to overpower us (Ephesians 4:27; 6:10-17; 1 Peter 5:8-9). "...Satan had failed to win the victory over him" (Hailey 328). "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Notice also that the charges of Job toward God were as unfounded and non-factual as were the unsubstantiated charges made by the friends toward Job; where observation fails and revelation from God has not been provided, man must not presume to know the spirit of another—man or God (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Still other lessons we learn include these. Suffering in one's life may arise from a number of different sources. "It is a mistake to say that all suffering comes from God, because we cause some suffering ourselves" (*Bible Exposition*). Other people may be the source of suffering by innocents who have no investment in or knowledge relating to their suffering. In the case of Job, Satan himself was behind the patriarch's relentless suffering. Yet, often sinner and saint alike blame God for disease, accident or natural disaster that touches the health or lives of loved ones. The Book of Job enables the student of the Bible to know better and envision a bigger picture, while being aware that God loves His children dearly (Matthew 10:29-31).

Almighty God is evident throughout the Book of Job even when He does not appear directly in the unfolding scenes, whereas some few books of the Bible may only merely allude to God (e.g., Esther).

The book of Job magnifies the sovereignty of God. From the very first chapter, it is obvious that God is in control; for even Satan is told what he can and cannot do. During the debate, it appears that God is absent; but He is aware of how Job feels and what Job and his friends say. Thirty-one times in the book of Job, God is called "the Almighty." (*Bible Exposition*)

Though Job argued with the three friends through three cycles of speeches, Job did not enter into a verbal exchange with Elihu. This latter, younger wise man made four speeches without response from either the three friends or from Job.

Job said nothing after Elihu's speeches, possibly because he saw some truth in what Elihu was saying. Elihu fittingly prepared the way for God to speak. He did so: (a) by defending God; (b) by sensitizing Job to his need for humility; (c) by describing God's wonders in natural revelation, which God elaborated on; (d) by probing Job with thought-provoking questions (33:13; 34:17-19,33; 35:2,6-7; 36:19,22-23,29; 37:15-18,20), a tactic that God continued; and (e) by targeting on Job's basic problem – justifying himself and condemning God – which God Himself later mentioned (cf. 32:2 with 40:8). (*Bible Knowledge*)

The endless wrangling with words between the four characters of the Book of Job closed. Jehovah, then, spoke to the three friends and to Job.

## **Chapter 8: Jehovah Speaks to Job (Job 38-41)**

The expressions of divine favor and love are not to be expected in the midst of angry controversy and heated debate. Neither Job nor his friends appear to have enjoyed communion with God, or to have tasted much of the happiness of religion, while the controversy was going on. They were excited by the discussion; the argument was the main thing; and on both sides they gave vent to emotions that were little consistent with the reigning love of God in the heart, and with the enjoyment of religion. There were high words; mutual criminations and recriminations; strong doubts expressed about the sincerity and purity of each other's character; and many things were said on both sides, as there usually is in such cases, derogatory to the character and government of God. (*Barnes' Notes*)

After the bickering concluded between the three friends, Elihu and Job, "...Jehovah spoke the final word" (Hailey 331). God's point of view is always the only point of view that really and eternally matters. Generally, mankind is slow to accept that fact regarding human redemption, acceptable worship, Christian living, Christian service and other Gospel truths. Unlike Job and those about him, we do not have to wait and wonder if God will speak to us; He has already spoken to us through the Bible, and those living today especially need to observe His message in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Romans 7:6-7; Hebrews 9:15).

Homer Hailey observed that, "Jehovah made no reference to the background (ch. 1-2), to Job's suffering or to his questions, charges, and harsh words, except to reveal that Job had spoken without knowledge" (331). God could have explained to Job how he had come about to suffer because he was an unparalleled specimen of humanity

or that Satan was really behind the suffering instead of God, but the Almighty did not and was not obligated to explain or defend Himself. We humans do not have the right to and cannot cross-examine God.

Job did not receive explanations regarding his problems; but he did come to a much deeper sense of the majesty and loving care of God. Thus he came to trust Him more fully, knowing that His ways should not be challenged. Though often inexplicable and mysterious, God's plans are benevolent and beneficial. (*Bible Knowledge*).

This speech is addressed particularly to Job, not only because he is the principal personage referred to in the book, but particularly because he had indulged in language of murmuring and complaint. God designed to bring him to a proper state of mind before he appeared openly for his vindication. (*Barnes' Notes*)

Job had wanted an audience with God, and now Almighty God stepped forth, so to speak, addressing him out of a whirlwind.

In a series of more than seventy, rapid-fire questions, the Lord bludgeons Job to his knees. ...Jehovah's questions are designed to emphasize two great propositions: His sovereignty in the *natural order of the universe* (38:1; cf. 40:5); and, His sovereignty in the *moral order of the universe* (40:6-41:34). (Jackson, *Book of Job* 79)

“...Jehovah asked questions which were intended to make Job realize the great distance between God and man” (Hailey 349). Mortals tend to forget about the magnitude of the gulf between God and man from every perspective.

Rather than Job summoning God to court and putting Him on trial for the injustices of which Job had accused Him, it was Job who was on trial and who was required to answer for himself before God. Likewise, our day in court awaits each of us, too (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-15). “God alone can ‘demand’ an account from His creatures (Job 42:4); man must not presume to ‘demand’ an account of God’s doings, but take it for granted that they must be good and righteous just because they emanate from God, who cannot but do right” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).

Historically, there have been two types of monarchies among humans: ***absolute monarchy*** or ***constitutional monarchy***. The King under an absolute monarchy was above the law. His word was final, and his behavior was not subject to critical review from anyone within his kingdom. For instance, ancient Babylonian kings were absolute monarchs. However, the king under a constitutional monarchy was obligated to obey the law as well as were all others within that kingdom. Medo-Persian kings were among the first such rulers to be subject to the laws of the kingdom like everyone else; in addition, Persian law was immutable so that it could not be changed even by the king himself (Esther 8:8). Today among nations, Saudi Arabia has an absolute monarchy, whereas the United Kingdom and Thailand are examples of constitutional monarchies now.

Our Creator God demonstrated to Job, to the other four speakers in the Book of Job, to the probable audience taking in the discourses and to Satan, as well as to every student of the Book of Job, that He is the ***absolute monarch*** of ***the entire universe*** and of ***the spiritual realm***, too. The point that we wish to make here is that **God is not answerable to anyone!** Neither Job nor we, as part of the *creation* at the hands of our *Creator*, have any standing to question God on any level. We are as clay in the hands of the Master Potter (Jeremiah 18:1-5), and as such, we lack the power to shape God, to effectively counteract His divine instructions (Matthew 7:21-23) found upon the pages of inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21) or to evade His appointed Judgment Day (Hebrews 9:27). At every step in our lives, and especially as we approach Almighty God in sacred, holy worship, each of us desperately needs to remember the rightful, unquestioned sovereignty of Jehovah God.

“The most impressive and convincing manner of arguing is allowed to be that by interrogation, which the Almighty here adopts” (Clarke). God tested the knowledge and wisdom of Job respecting several elements of creation, including: laying the foundation of the earth, the origin and boundary of the sea, the dawning of a new day, springs in the ocean floor, canyons and mountains beneath the seas, the realm of the dead, paths of light, the value of snow and hail, wind and rain, lightning, seasonal changes, heavenly bodies, the animal world, and what we today call dinosaurs (Jackson, *Book of Job* 79-88). Essentially, in no uncertain terms, God told “...Job that he is not qualified to rule the world, nor is he in a position to judge Him who does!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 85).

## **Chapter 9: Job Is Blessed (Job 42)**

The last chapter of the Book of Job opens with Job replying to God. How unique and wonderful is that! Sometimes in both testaments when the Godhead intervened, particularly evil people had no recourse whereby they could speak directly to God. They simply and immediately experienced the wrath of God, often with their sudden death. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2) as well as Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:6-7) in the Old Testament were struck dead quickly, and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) in the New Testament record died instantly. Hundreds of thousands of Israelites perished in the wilderness over 40 years because of their sins, such as the many who died because of the biting, fiery serpents sent upon them by God (Numbers 21:6-7; 1 Corinthians 10:9).

“Job knew he was beaten. There was no way he could argue his case with God” (*Bible Exposition*). What could Job say to Almighty God? Job acknowledged God’s sovereignty in contrast to his own personal failings. “I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know” (verse 3). “I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes” (verse 6).

The sage of Uz is admitting the humbling effect of Jehovah’s questions. ...Job is thus sorry for his rash, though anguished, words. ...it is *never* right to lash out at God. While we are hurting very badly, it may be a *human* thing to do, but it is always wrong, and when we “get hold” of ourselves, we will repent! (Jackson, *Book of Job* 92)

“...Job was neither confessing to nor repenting of sins charged by the friends, because he was not guilty of them” (Hailey 366).

We need to remember always the sovereignty of God over us, and especially in contrast to our own personal failings. We, too, must repent whenever we discover that our lives are out of harmony

with divine instruction. Under patriarchy, Job was a child of God, and if we have obeyed the Gospel through and including baptism (Mark 16:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8), we too are children of God. As children of God, then, through repentance and prayer our sins also can be forgiven (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Obviously, God accepted Job's penitence since Jehovah remarkably blessed Job afterward.

"Now that the difference between Jehovah and Job has been resolved, Jehovah directed His attention to the friends, addressing Eliphaz as representative of the three" (Hailey 367). The *three friends*, though, had to act out repentance and petition of God for them to obtain spiritual restoration. Jehovah placed requirements upon them that included their repentance toward Job as well. God referred to "my servant" Job four times in verses 7-8, which further validated faithful Job to the friends and all present who heard God speak (Jackson, *Book of Job* 94). Hailey suggested that "[t]he large number of sacrifices demanded infers the seriousness of their sins in God's sight" (367).

The *three friends* were dependent for their forgiveness upon Job's prayer for them. "Prayer, on behalf of others, when they are penitent, is effective (James 5:15-16)... Is it not truly remarkable that Job should unhesitatingly pray for these who had so relentlessly made him the object of their verbal assaults?" (Jackson, *Book of Job* 94).

We should overcome the unkindness of our friends by praying for them... This is the true way of meeting harsh reproaches and unkind reflections on our character. Whatever may be the severity with which we are treated by others; whatever charges they may bring against us of hypocrisy or wickedness; however ingenious may be their arguments to prove this, or however cutting their sarcasm and retorts, we should never refuse to pray for them. We should always be willing to seek the blessing of God upon them, and be ready to bear them on our hearts before the throne of mercy. (*Barnes' Notes*)

We need to pray for our enemies, or as in the Book of Job, pray for friends or brethren who have made themselves our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Whereas some translations speak here of the “wrath” of God toward them (verse 7), other versions word it as God’s “anger.” **We simply do not want God to be angry with us!** “When the Scriptures say, therefore, that Jehovah is angry, man had better take notice” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 93). We can know, today, whether God is angry or happy with us by inspecting our lives with the Word of God; we do not want to wait until we appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ to ascertain whether God is angry with us.

Funny isn’t it, how one’s friends and relatives are sometimes more difficult to find during the hard times, but they are plentiful during occasions of prosperity?

We are horrified to have it brought distinctly before us on the last page of the book that Job had had brothers and sisters as well as other acquaintances during the whole time of his affliction; and yet they had discreetly retired from the unpleasant neighbourhood of the afflicted man. Now they reappear with his prosperity. (*Pulpit Commentary*)

However, God used friends and family, in part, to restore to Job some of his former wealth and self-esteem.

The restoration of blessings to Job is certainly a pleasing end to the intense saga compacted into the book’s 42 chapters. Material blessings and earthly happiness, though, do not represent the complete picture; our lives consist of more than eating, drinking or clothing ourselves (Matthew 6:25, 31-33). “But Job’s greatest blessing was not the regaining of his health and wealth or the rebuilding of his family and circle of friends. His greatest blessing was knowing God better...” (*Bible Exposition*).

# Chapter 10: Concluding Thoughts

Overall, one might say that for his *pain and suffering*, but more so because of his relentless loyalty to God, the Almighty doubly blessed Job over family and property he formerly enjoyed. The most important messages from the Book of Job for us today must be these: “Even when we become discouraged and weak, we must still know that God is there and He loves us. ...no matter how dismal things look upon the earth, uprightness will ultimately prevail. ...friends and family may fail one, but God never will forsake the righteous...” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 98). “...Job...though he may have ‘bent,’ he never broke” (Hailey 371). We, too, may find ourselves **down but not out!**

A couple concluding notes of interest pertain to Satan and an inheritance custom. “There is more space devoted to Satan in the book of Job than in any other portion of the Scriptures” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 98). “Job’s giving an inheritance to his daughters led Delitzsch to observe, ‘Ver. 15b sounds more Arabian than Israelitish,’ because a daughter’s receiving an inheritance under the Mosaic law depended on the father’s not having sons (Num. 27:6-11). This adds further evidence for the antiquity of the book’s background” (Hailey 370).

Finally, we conclude from the Book of Job:

We must not misinterpret this final chapter and conclude that every trial will end with all problems solved, all hard feelings forgiven, and everybody “living happily ever after.” It just doesn’t always happen that way! This chapter assures us that, no matter what happens to us, God always writes the last chapter. Therefore, we don’t have to be afraid. We can trust God to do what is right, no matter how painful our situation might be. (*Bible Exposition*)

In addition, *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown* makes this allegorical comparison between the status of the “three friends” and humanity today. “As Job’s friends had to come to God for reconciliation through the intercession of him whom they had wronged (Job 42:8-9), so must we come through the intercession of that Saviour whom our whole race has dishonoured and crucified by sin.”

# Chapter 11: Outstanding Verses in the Book of Job

The “outstanding verses” selected below no way imply that these are more special or of greater importance than other verses not mentioned just here. Doubtless, many additional passages appeal to other readers, and even this author could add to the following list. These Scriptures are merely *some* to which we afford extra notice at this time.

## Speaking Expositorily

- **Job 14:1-2** “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue.”

This oft quoted or cited passage especially at funerals occurred in one of Job’s speeches to his supposed “three friends.” As such, it was uttered by an uninspired man, but recorded by an inspired writer. Uninspired writers sometimes utter truths, and at other times, they may say things that are untrue. In this instance, what Job said corresponds to other Scriptures that God placed in the Bible to teach mankind about the brevity and uncertainty of life. “All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away” (1 Peter 1:24). “[W]hereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that’” (James 4:14-15). Job, though, offered a decidedly negative outlook on life, which was understandable given the great sufferings through which he was going. Everyone’s life is interspersed with good times and bad times, which is such a short ordeal in comparison to the approaching eternity into which each of us will be thrust upon our deaths or when Jesus Christ returns to fetch His

own. We must make the best of it and prepare to go home to live with God (John 14:1-3).

- **Job 19:25-26** “For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God.”

At first glance, Job 19:25-26 appears to substantiate the New Testament truths that Jesus Christ is ultimately the Redeemer of fallen humanity and that there will be a general resurrection of mankind from the death-chained grave. That is exactly what we envision when we sing the hymn, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.” Doubtless, that spiritual song derives from this passage. So adamant that Job 19:25-26 refers to Jesus Christ, brother James Burton Coffman penned in his commentary that “[o]nly a fool could miss his identity.”

To undergird that conclusion, some commentators suppose that Job was divinely inspired—at least regarding that and possibly some other statements. However, it is abundantly clear that in much of what Job had to say in the arguments with his self-styled “friends” that he was wrong, and hence uninspired. Consequently, God rebuked Job for those erroneous outbursts.

In reality, there is some confusion regarding the accurate interpretation of the original language in Job 19:25-26. For instance, the NKJV omits the words “worms” and “body” that were added by the KJV translators. In addition, the word translated “earth” really means “dust.” Then, there is some question regarding the meaning of the Hebrew preposition in the last phrase of verse 26. Whereas the NKJV reads, “That **in** my flesh I shall see God,” the ASV reads, “**without** my flesh I shall see God.”

Central to understanding the meaning of Job 19:25-26 is the interpretation and meaning of the word, “Redeemer.” It has a meaning aside from any possible application to Jesus Christ.

The Hebrew word translated “Redeemer” in verse 25 refers to the kinsman redeemer, the near relative who could avenge his brother’s blood (Deuteronomy 19:6-12), reclaim and restore his brother’s property (Leviticus 25:23-24,39-55), and set his brother free from slavery (25:25).

The kinsman redeemer could also go to court on behalf of a wronged relative (Proverbs 23:10-11). In the book of Ruth, Boaz is the kinsman redeemer who was willing and able to rescue Ruth and give her a new life in a new land. Previously, Job had talked about his need for an umpire (Job 9:33-34) and an Advocate in heaven (16:19). Now he takes it a step further: his Redeemer will one day vindicate him, and Job will be there to witness it! When you consider how little God had revealed in Job's day about the future life, these words become a remarkable testimony of faith.

*(Bible Exposition)*

Even very early in man's habitation of our planet and in his relationship with God, he was aware of a future life beyond living on earth. We may know more through inspection of the completed revelation from God than what Job knew. On the other hand, Job and his contemporaries may have known more about the afterlife than has been preserved for us upon the pages of inspiration.

We ask ourselves: Was Job referring to a near kinsman who someday would vindicate him and validate his claim of innocence, or did Job actually refer to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer? Does the passage teach a bodily resurrection, or does it teach consciousness after death, at which time one will meet God?

If the passage refers to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, too, then the "dust" or "earth" pertains to His incarnation (His first coming) rather than to His Second Coming. Job 19:25-26 does not teach the false, denominational doctrine of premillennialism.

What is certain is that Job maintained his innocence. Further, Job had no doubt that after death he would have his long-sought meeting with God. "After he was dead, Job then would see God. He would continue in a conscious existence; he would not be annihilated or sink into soul sleep" (*Bible Knowledge*). Whether in the body or out of the body does not materially affect the expectation of Job to see God, though in the body or out of the body does matter respecting whether the verse refers to the future bodily resurrection. That truth is firm (1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), irrespective of whether Job's speech intimated it.

- **Job 26:7** “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.”

Facts relative to astronomy pertaining to the gravitational position of our planet in our solar system were known generally to modern science only recently. This verse appears “...amazingly in accord with facts not known or agreed on by scientists till a few hundred years ago” (*Bible Knowledge*). Parallelism in Job 26:7 may merely refer to the empty, northern night sky. It is uncertain whether Job referred to a scientific marvel completely unknown (as far as we can ascertain) during Patriarchal times. While not wanting to understate biblical evidence, we need to exercise caution not to overstate biblical information.

- **Job 28:15-16** “It cannot be purchased for gold, Nor can silver be weighed for its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx or sapphire.”

Reference to weighing silver indicates the early timeframe of the narration recorded in the Book of Job. “Before the art of coining was known, it was common to weigh the precious metals that were used as a medium of trade; compare Genesis 23:16” (*Barnes’ Notes*).

The location of Ophir has not been determined definitely, but numerous Bible references relate to the finest gold and an ample source of it as well.

Ophir is the name of a land or city somewhere to the South or Southeast of Palestine for which Solomon’s ships along with Phoenician vessels set out from Ezion-geber at the head of the Gulf of Aqabah, returning with great stores of gold, precious stones and “almug” - wood (1 Kings 9:28; 10:11; 2 Chronicles 9:10; 1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chronicles 8:18). (*ISBE*)

The Job 28:15-16 passage emphasizes the unsurpassed value of true wisdom. Neither any quantity of silver nor the finest gold could equal the value of true wisdom.

- **Job 37:24** “Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart.”

Fear of God results from “...his almighty power, his absolute moral perfection, and his superiority to all human questioning, ample grounds for the profoundest reverence and fear” (*Pulpit Commentary*). “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17). Furthermore, God is unmoved by self-styled, human wisdom (Isaiah 5:21; Matthew 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 3:19).

Elihu, most likely not inspired, made true statements in this verse. We must revere God, who is so far above us—His creation. Fortunately for us, He also judges without respect of persons; we can rely on Him to treat us fairly and evenhandedly.

- **Job 38:16** “Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths?”

Even today, mankind knows comparatively little about this last earthly frontier, and most certainly, Job had little knowledge of it either. Amazingly, though, fountains on the ocean floor gush out water, at least some of it being fresh water. “There are, even today, freshwater springs beneath the ocean floor in many parts of the world, e.g., Greece, Italy, Australia, the South Sea Islands, along the Atlantic continental shelf, etc.” (Jackson, “Natural Disasters”). These inspired words of God recorded by inspiration upon the pages of the Book of Job, in that very old book, by far predate independently discovered human knowledge about “springs in the sea.” This speaks to the inspiration and reliability—the divine origin—of the Holy Bible.

- **Job 38:25** “Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water, Or a path for the thunderbolt?”

Especially the “path for the thunderbolt” captures my imagination. Whereas one can visualize floodwaters flowing over riverbanks and seeking their own level, who can map out through the air the path of a lightning bolt? No human can do that. The zigzag electrical strike takes a path beyond our expectation or explanation sufficient to predict accurately its precise movement. We, like Job, are incapable of demonstrating to God our competence to manage

the universe, and hence occupy a position from which we could criticize God respecting His administration of it.

- **Job 41:34** “He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride.”

In his day and time, the leviathan was the king of the proverbial jungle. He was the undisputed king of the beasts. The leviathan feared neither anything in the animal world nor mankind either. Man often prides himself as being dominant in all areas of the created universe, but that mentality did not extend to the leviathan, which man could neither domesticate nor conquer. The leviathan, not man, was the fiercest creature that God ever made.

## Little Homilies

- **Job 1:1** “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was **blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.**”
- **Job 1:8** “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered **My servant Job**, that there is none like him on the earth, **a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?**’”
- **Job 2:3** “Then the LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered **My servant Job**, that there is none like him on the earth, **a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?** And still **he holds fast to his integrity**, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.’”
- **Job 42:9** “...for the LORD had accepted Job.”

These statements by God about Job remind us of the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 25:21 and 23: “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your lord.” Throughout time, there have been a few souls whose names appear in Holy Writ and that inspiration acclaims as “blameless,” upright and righteous beyond their peers. King Hezekiah was such a man (2 Chronicles 31:20-21). Likewise, the parents of John the Baptist were to be “blameless” (Luke 1:6). Of course, Noah and his family, before either of them

and Job also, were such people, too (Genesis 6:8; 2 Peter 2:5). Obviously, Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), who did not see death, were such examples of godliness, too. Furthermore, the Bible's Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11 chronicles many outstanding Bible characters who are worthy of our imitation respecting our Christian faith.

None of the individuals here mentioned were divine, sinless beings, but they were ordinary people like us. Job was a man (1:1)! Yet, he was a servant of God. In addition, God repeatedly stressed whose servant Job was by saying "My servant." Though we are ordinary people as well, you and I can be "blameless," "upright," God-fearing and 'shun evil.' That should be our *everyday, all day goal*.

For He who would love life And see good days, Let him  
refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking  
deceit. Let him **turn away from evil and do good**; Let him  
seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on  
the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But  
the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. (1 Peter  
3:10-12 emphasis added)

After all, we earnestly covet God's approval akin to Job 42:9, "...the LORD had accepted Job."

- **Job 1:21-22** "And he said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.' In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."

The patriarch was not animated by possession of this world's wealth and accompanying amenities. It seems that Job envisioned a bigger picture than one's span of years on planet earth; he realized that he had come from somewhere before his debut in this world, and he grasped that he would be somewhere after death. He knew, correctly so, that one's earthly sojourn is merely an interval. Job was a *pilgrim* rather than a *homesteader*. His attitude toward riches agreed with the divine instructions penned by the apostle Paul centuries later.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:7-10)

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

We need to adopt the spiritual posture of the old patriarch. The here and the now is not worthy to be compared with what awaits eternally. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). Not only are the sufferings we may presently experience not worthy to be considered alongside of the heavenly future, neither are the wonderful blessings of which we may be partakers worthy to consider in the same vein as what awaits the godly eternally. When we truly seek spiritual things first (Matthew 6:33) and lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:20-21), only then will we have a spiritual kinship with the Bible character Job.

- **Job 2:9-10** “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast to your **integrity**? Curse God and die!’ But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this **Job did not sin with his lips.**”
- **Job 27:5-6** “... Till I die I will not put away my **integrity** from me. My **righteousness** I hold fast, and will not let it go; My heart shall not reproach me **as long as I live.**”

Job was *in it to win it!* He was not merely dabbling in religion, but he willingly immersed himself in the God-given religion of the time—Patriarchy. When we live Christ-driven, purposeful lives, we will not dabble in Christianity, but we will immerse ourselves in the God-given religion to which everyone now living is amenable. Our Christian “integrity” and “righteousness” ought to be evident to all onlookers everywhere, every day as well as every waking moment irrespective of whether anyone besides the Godhead is around to observe. Our lives are not orderly unless we master our conduct (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 4:31) and our speech (James 3:2-12; 1 Peter 2:1). If our faithfulness persists at the time of our demise, even if our faithfulness would be the cause of someone taking our lives, only then, will we be rewarded (Revelation 2:10). If we falter before we die or Christ returns, we will be eternally lost if we do not repent while we yet have time (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). Each child of God ought to embrace the challenge wholeheartedly to demonstrate Christian “integrity” and “righteousness” “as long as I live.” Nothing else will do!

- **Job 3:25-26** “For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.”

Often, bad things happen to good people. Sometimes we are our own worst enemies, and we must suffer self-inflicted torments because of bad choices that we made. At other times, we are victims of the bad choices of others (e.g., abusers, thieves, robbers, etc.) or because of natural disasters, disease or old age. All of it is only temporary *at worst*, lasting only as long as life itself, which is comparatively short considering the eternity toward which each of us is inching daily. There is a “rest” for the children of God that will outweigh by far what we may have to endure in this life. “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ...Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:9-11).

- **Job 16:2** “...Miserable comforters are you all!”

Unlike Job’s supposed friends, Christians are supposed to be *expert comforters*. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). God’s Word is our instructional manual in all things, including on how we may comfort others. We may comfort someone merely by our presence, without words—not knowing what to say, or knowing that there is nothing to say on that occasion. Providing someone the knowledge of how to prepare to meet God in the Judgment (Amos 4:12)—how to become a Christian (Mark 16:16) or how a Christian can receive forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9) promises eternal benefits and peace of mind while on earth (1 John 2:3). In addition, we can offer human kindness, encouragement and moral support. At times, we may need to expend not only ourselves but also some of our money to alleviate some of the suffering of Christians and non-Christians (Galatians 6:10). Christians should not be “miserable comforters.”

- **Job 19:2-3** “How long will you torment my soul, And break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have reproached me; You are not ashamed that you have wronged me.”

Sometimes even Christians wrong one another (1 Corinthians 6:8). Frankly, no one can hurt us more emotionally and psychologically than can our brothers and sisters in Christ. If no one in this life ever learns of our innocence regarding some charge against us, we can take comfort in the fact that Almighty God, ultimately our Judge, knows what is true and what is false. While Christians need to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:16-20), we ought not to arrive at negative and accusatory conclusions in the absence of fruit to inspect; none of us are omniscient. We must judge “righteous judgment” (John 7:24; Matthew 7:2). Mankind cannot stand in God’s place to pass eternal judgment on others (Romans 2:5; James 4:11-12). As difficult as it may be, we must persevere in righteousness even if we are maligned (1 Peter 4:4), like Job did. Our immortal souls are too valuable to forfeit because someone has hurt our feelings or otherwise mistreated us.

- **Job 19:14** “My **relatives** have failed, And my close friends have forgotten me.”

- **Job 19:19** “All my close friends abhor me, And those whom I love have turned against me.”

Friends and family often hinder one from Christian worship, Christian living and Christian service. Our chief Friend must be Jesus Christ. Our most important family members include our elder brother Jesus Christ (Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:5-7) and our Heavenly Father. Our Brother and our Father will always be there for us, no matter what—in this life and in the life to come (Matthew 28:20). Jesus said:

For I have come to “set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law”; and “a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:35-37)

If we let them, some “friends” also will corrupt us from the ways of God. “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1 Corinthians 15:33). The right Christian friends, though, will help us not to stray from the *pilgrim pathway*. “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

If our earthly family members are godly Christians, great! If not, we must minimize their corruptive influence upon us and upon our families by aligning ourselves more with the family of God. If our “friends” wield an ungodly sway over us, we need to opt out of those relationships and select a better class of friends, especially from among the household of faith (Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 2:17).

- **Job 31:1** “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”

One translation provides commentary on the thought at hand when it reads, “I made a covenant with my eyes not to **look lustfully at a girl**” (Job 31:1 NIV emphasis added). Similarly, our Lord said, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”

(Matthew 5:27-28 NKJV). Unlike Job, even many Christian men have not yet ‘made a covenant with their eyes not to look lustfully at women.’ Both Christian men and Christian women need to shutter their eyes from wantonly and carelessly allowing their lustful eyes to screen the nudity or near nakedness characteristic of many movies, books, magazines, Internet sites and places frequented by people in degrees of undress.

- **Job 36:3** “I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to **my Maker.**”
- **Job 36:26** “Behold, **God is great**, and we do not know Him; Nor can the number of His years be discovered.”

The colloquial phrase, “my Maker,” has a biblical origin. Likewise, the popular phrase “God is good all of the time” is similar to “God is great.” Truly, we need to acknowledge always that God is our Maker, our Deliverer, and He will be our Judge, too. In the spirit of Amos 4:12, each of us needs to put his life in order in preparation to **meet our Maker** (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-15). Not only when assembled together on the Lord’s Day, but every day, we ought to express in our lives our confidence that God is both great and good, and that He will work good in our lives and eternity (Romans 8:28).

- **Job 40:9** “Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?”

None of us were alive and present at the baptism of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-17) or at His Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-6). God spoke aloud on both of those occasions, and I cannot conceive of a weak, puny verbal audio in which God spoke from the heavens to mankind. I imagine the deep, booming or thundering voice of God. Numerous times throughout especially the Old Testament, God spoke directly to different ones (Leviticus 1:1; Deuteronomy 4:12), and apparently no one ever mistook the voice of God for that of a mere man.

Though God no longer speaks directly and audibly to mankind today, we do have His words through the Holy Spirit upon the pages of inspiration—the Holy Bible. Those words, despite being upon the

printed page, should be as thunderous in our ears as if our God audibly pronounced them in our hearing. Practice hearing the ‘thunder of His voice’ each time you read God’s Word.

- **Job 42:7** “And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has’” (cf. verse 8 also).

Clearly, God takes it very seriously when anyone purports to speak on His behalf or about Him. Job’s friends got it wrong on both counts, and God attributed to them sin for their misconduct. Likewise today, God views it as sinful to teach or to preach doctrinal error. The false teaching of preachers and teachers not only condemns them, but it also corrupts their auditors who digest error. It is no wonder, then, that preachers and teachers will bear a more stringent judgment (James 3:1). Further, it is no surprise that God wants impenitent false teachers marked or identified so that unwary Christians can be forewarned to avoid such falsehoods (Romans 16:17-18). Unfortunately, even some Christians prefer alternatives to “sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3). Elders must defend “sound doctrine” (Titus 1:9), and preachers must preach, “sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). Every Christian must analyze what he hears or reads, comparing it with the Scriptures (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11).

- **Job 42:17** “So Job died, old and full of days.”

The phrase “old and full of days” classes Job with some other noteworthy characters in the Bible. “So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him” (Genesis 35:29). “So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel” (1 Chronicles 23:1). “So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place” (1 Chronicles 29:28). “But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died” (2 Chronicles 24:15).

I once entertained the unlikely personal goal of living to be 120-years-old like Moses did. “Moses was one hundred and twenty years

old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished” (Deuteronomy 34:7). As far as the eyes are concerned, I began wearing glasses when I was in the second grade, and my eyesight has diminished since then. Having lived for many decades now, I clearly see that my physical body would wear out long before 120 years. I resign myself in a sense to emulating Job and others of whom it was said that they “died, old and full of days.”

However, it is not the number of days alone that a person may live on this earth, but what matters is how he or she lives. The Bible merely says of Methuselah, for instance, “So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died” (Genesis 5:27). You and I both need to resolve to live for Jesus Christ, irrespective of whether our years are many or whether they are few. “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (Ephesians 4:1). “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

# Chapter 12: Did Dinosaurs Really Exist?

Yes, the fossil evidence for the existence of dinosaurs is overwhelming. Dinosaurs really did exist. In addition to abundant fossil remains to prove that dinosaurs once roamed the earth, the **historical record** also testifies to the former existence of what we call “dinosaurs.” The Bible is just one of the historical records that verify that dinosaurs once inhabited earth.

The word “dinosaur,” meaning “terrible lizard” was added to the English language in 1841, and so it is no wonder that the word “dinosaur” does not appear in English Bible translations such as the *King James* that predated the existence of the word “dinosaur.” However, the Bible does describe dinosaur-like creatures within its pages.

Job 40:15-24 introduces the **“behemoth.”** From verse 15, one learns: (1) This beast cohabited the planet with mankind. (2) “He eats grass like an ox” (NKJV). Verse 16 says “strength is in its hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles.” Verse 17 compares this creature’s tail to a cedar tree—one of the largest trees in girth (up to 52’) and length (up to 152’), a far different kind of tail from modern-day, large, land animals like the hippopotamus or the elephant. In addition, the behemoth had strong thighs. Verse 18 attributes to the behemoth “bones” like “beams of brass” and “ribs like bars of iron.” Verse 19 affirms the behemoth to be the most massive of all the creatures God created. Furthermore, this creature was such that only God could slay it. Whereas verse 20 notes that the behemoth was at home on the land (e.g., “mountains”), this creature was fearless in marshes and rivers, even at flood stage (see also verse 23). Verse 23 also identifies one of the places on earth where the behemoth lived—around the Jordan River. A form of the Hebrew word for “behemoth” occurs 190 times in the Old Testament and is variously

translated as “beast” or “cattle”; some of those may very well also refer to what we call dinosaurs today.

A dinosaur-like sea creature (verses 1-2, 7, 31-32), the “**leviathan**,” appears in Job 41:1-34. The leviathan could not be domesticated or tamed (verse 4) and was unsuitable for a pet (verse 5). It was invincible (verse 9) to all weaponry of the ancient world (i.e., sword, spear, dart, javelin, arrows and slingstones, verses 26, 28), and the leviathan was fearless (verse 33). This creature evidently did not necessarily pursue humans naturally, but if approached by men, it would readily attack (verse 10). The leviathan was swift enough in water to make whitewater waves as it swam (verses 31-32).

Yet, the leviathan also came ashore, too (verse 30). He was a massive creature (verse 12) with natural armor including scales (verses 13-17). The sight of him as he raised himself up struck fear in warriors (verse 25). His destructive powers crushed “iron as straw and bronze as rotten wood” (verse 27). Whereas the behemoth was the largest creature God had made (Job 40:19), the leviathan was the fiercest creature on earth (Job 41:9-10, 33-34).

God’s description of the leviathan in the Bible provokes man’s imagination because nothing like it lives today. It had a noteworthy, powerful neck (verse 22). The leviathan’s teeth were no less alarming (verse 14). His belly was a remarkable breastplate useful for both defense and offense, leaving distinctive, pointed impressions in the mud wherever it had been (verse 30). This beast’s eyes shone as miniature suns (verse 18). The most astonishing description of the leviathan was that it breathed fire (verse 18-21)! Smoke rolled from its nostrils (verse 20), and the leviathan’s fiery breath set brush on fire (verse 20). Incidentally, several ancient civilizations’ historical annals record lizard-like creatures that breathed fire.

Another Hebrew word, “**tannin**” (singular) or “tannim” (plural), describes a dinosaur-like creature of the sea (Psalm 148:7). It appears 28 times in the Old Testament, and it has been translated sometimes as “sea monster” (Lamentations 4:3 KJV; Genesis 1:21; Psalm 74:13; 148:7 ASV), “sea creatures” (Genesis 1:21; Psalm 148:7, NKJV) “monster” (Jeremiah 51:34; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2 NKJV; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9; Jeremiah 51:34; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2) or

“dragon” (Deuteronomy 32:33; Nehemiah 2:13; Job 30:29; Psalm 44:19; 74:13; 148:7; Isaiah 13:22; 34:13; 35:7; 43:20; 51:9; Jeremiah 9:11; 10:22; 14:6; 49:33; 51:34, 37; Ezekiel 29:3; Micah 1:8 KJV), among other references.

Human history aside from the Bible also acknowledges the existence of what we today call dinosaurs or dinosaur-like creatures. Following is a sampling.

- A Greek vase dating to 550 B.C. shows both men and a dinosaur, indicating that mankind and dinosaurs coexisted.
- About 450 B.C., the ancient historian Herodotus wrote about flying, snake-like reptiles.
- In 1896, Samuel Hubbard discovered ancient Indian drawings of animals, including a dinosaur, on a canyon wall in Arizona.
- At Natural Bridges National Monument Petroglyph in Utah is an ancient rock carving of a dinosaur.
- For hundreds of years, people have been collecting Ica Peru burial stones that depict on them various kinds of dinosaurs, some which only recently have the fossilized remains of those kinds of dinosaurs been uncovered. These stones also indicate peculiar textures of dinosaur skin, which recently has been confirmed upon discovery of fossilized dinosaur skin. These burial stones only date back from A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500.
- In 1944, Waldear Julsrud found ancient dinosaur figurines in Mexico. Hundreds of handmade dinosaur figurines were unearthed, some reaching five feet in length.
- In 1968, William J. Meister found a marine (trilobite) fossil 700 feet up a cliff in Utah, and the fossil was inside a fossilized footprint of a sandal.
- In 1983, a human footprint and a three-toed dinosaur footprint were found in rock in the Turkmen Republic.

Dinosaurs were created within the six days of creation (Exodus 20:11) and obviously coexisted with mankind until such time as they became extinct. Human history, scientific discoveries and the biblical record confirm that people and dinosaurs populated the earth at the same time. Not only so, but some of the references above pertain to drawings, carvings and pottery that depict dinosaurs, and which were made just hundreds of years ago or a thousand years or so ago. Atheistic evolutionists refuse to acknowledge historical and scientific evidence, but now you know the truth about dinosaurs.

# Chapter 13: Satan— Man’s Greatest Adversary

## Introducing Satan

Studying the Book of Job is a good occasion to study about Satan since more verses in Job cite this infamous Bible character than occurs in any other Bible book (Jackson, *Book of Job* 98). People often ponder the **origin and nature of Satan**, and only the Bible can offer any insight respecting his identity. “The Bible does not address specifically the origin of Satan, yet there is adequate information to draw a logical, well-reasoned conclusion as to how he came into existence” (Thompson). Since one learns from Scripture that Satan is not deity but is subject to deity, it must be that Satan is a created being (as we are also). From the opening pages of the Bible, regarding creation, everything God created was initially “good” (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). **Later**, man (Genesis 6:5-6) and beast (Genesis 6:7) departed from their original state (Genesis 6:12-13), for which reason God destroyed all but eight souls in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20). Likewise, Satan departed from his original state. “According to Psalm 103:20-21, angels do have divine regulations...” though “commandments given to angels are different from those given to man” (Jones 30). Mankind and Satan exercised the freewill with which God had endowed each of them to sin against God.

Several verses of Scripture reveal that Satan was once an angel who rebelled against God. In other words, Satan is “a good angel that went bad” (Stacy 49). Furthermore, Satan was not alone in this rebellion, but other angels participated with him in that rebellion; consider these. “For if God did not spare **the angels who sinned**, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4 NKJV). “And the **angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own**

**abode**, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6). “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the **everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels**’” (Matthew 25:41).

## Freewill

God created neither robotic angels nor robotic humans. Though God through omniscience has the capacity to know the future, inclusive of the fact that Satan and other angels would rebel, and that humanity, likewise, would rebel, He still chose to create angels and humans—with freewill. Therefore, both Satan and humans bear respective responsibility for their sinful actions. For instance, despite the fact that Satan introduced temptation to sin into the world, God punished Adam and Eve for their transgressions—because they were guilty.

Every passage that calls upon mankind to respond in a designated way implies the capacity of mankind to respond satisfactorily of his own freewill or volition. As an example, consider the following abbreviated plan of salvation found in the New Testament. Hear God’s Word and believe (Romans 10:17; Mark 16:16). Repent of sins (Luke 13:5; Acts 17:30). Profess Jesus as Christ (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). Be immersed in water for the remission of sins (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). Be faithful (Revelation 2:10). Erring Christians are also called upon by God through the Bible to repent and pray for forgiveness of sins (Acts 8:22-24).

In addition, every passage that warns mankind also implies the capacity of mankind to respond satisfactorily of his own freewill or volition; note the following verses. “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12), and “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). Every instruction in the Bible assumes man’s ability to comply with it or to refuse it, thereby confirming man’s ability (and responsibility) to use his freewill correctly (but acknowledging that he may opt to use his freewill incorrectly).

## **Names of Satan**

Names of “Satan” (1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6; Matthew 4:10, etc.) found in the Bible include: “the devil” (Matthew 4:1; Ephesians 4:27, etc.), “Beelzebub” (Matthew 12:24), “wicked one” (Matthew 13:19), “enemy” (Matthew 13:28), “the god of this age” [“world” KJV] (2 Corinthians 4:4), “ruler [“prince” KJV] of this world” (John 12:31), “Belial” (2 Corinthians 6:15), “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), “Adversary” (1 Peter 5:8), “Abaddon” or “Apollyon” (Revelation 9:11), “dragon, that serpent of old” (Revelation 20:2) and others. Additional verses describe his heinous character flaws, such as being the father of lust and lies as well as being a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). “No criminal known to man has more aliases than Satan himself” (Jones 34).

## **The Devil Is Real**

The Devil, also known as Satan, is real. Though he is a spirit being without a fleshly body, the Devil is a real person. God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the angels are other spirit-beings who do not have fleshly bodies. They are all real persons, too.

...the devil is a personal being. Satan is not merely a personification of the principle of evil; in the Bible he is constantly viewed as a real personality. Personal names and personal pronouns are used with reference to him, and personal acts and attributes are ascribed to him. (Jackson, *Book of Job* 9)

We can know that Satan is a real person since: (1) He is mentioned along with other real persons, including Jesus Christ. (2) He is described with personal characteristics such as speaking, tempting and lying. (3) The Devil is one of several angels who sinned and was punished by God. (4) God has prepared an eternal place for Satan and his angels. See Matthew 4:1-11; 25:41; John 8:44 and 2 Peter 2:4.

The devil is evil and desires people to become evil like him. Further, Satan will be punished forever in hell, and he wants everyone to suffer the same punishment. In a figure, Scripture views the Devil as a vicious lion stalking his prey. “Be sober, be vigilant;

because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Fortunately, God today limits the power of Satan. See 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. Therefore, mankind is able to resist the influence of Satan. “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

However, evil people are servants of the Devil, and they influence others around them to become evil also. The apostle Paul called a man a “son of the devil” (Acts 13:6-12) for trying to prevent another man from hearing the Word of God. Sometimes men who serve Satan appear to be righteous. “And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

When anyone practices sin, he is serving the Devil. “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). To turn away from righteous living is said in Scripture to be turning to Satan. “For some have already turned aside after Satan” (1 Timothy 5:15). Sadly, many people turn from God to Satan. “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” [“devils” KJV] (1 Timothy 4:1).

The Devil is real, and his evil influence is powerful. Many people are also evil and are children of the Devil. However, remember, Satan can be resisted. Therefore, each of us has the personal responsibility: (1) to resist the Devil, (2) not to practice sin, and (3) to submit to the will of God. Daily study of the New Testament will help one to accomplish these three goals.

## Satanic Methods & Goals

Satan employs primarily two methods against humanity today. First, he makes a three-pronged assault about which we read in 1 John 2:16—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Secondly, “Satan comes in the garb of false religion” (Hailey 376), camouflaged as “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians

11:14). Not only do denominations misdirect believers away from the church of our Lord, but also the numerous world religions steer myriads of souls away from Christianity. Satan applies his craftiness (2 Corinthians 11:3) to both methods to obscure the Lord's way from humanity.

The goal of Satan is to thwart the efforts of God to redeem mankind and provide for him an eternal home in Heaven. It may be that Satan's reaction to God's creation of humanity was the catalyst for angelic rebellion in heaven. Ancient, uninspired *traditions* surmise that a portion of the superhuman angelic host who were charged with ministering to humans (Hebrews 1:14) became incensed at the thought of serving lowly man. Yet, one cannot say definitely that this was the reason for the revolt. "When that occurred, however-why they revolted, or what was the number of the apostates-we have not the slightest information, and on these points conjecture would be useless" (*Barnes' Notes*). However, apparently "pride" was a significant factor in the angelic rebellion (1 Timothy 3:6).

In any case, Satan and his demonic, angel followers battle God, and they oppose mankind, too. The chief way in which the Devil and other renegade angels challenge God is through their efforts to ruin as much of humanity as they can. We may be the reason behind angelic rebellion as well as the focal point of relentless spiritual attacks. The "angels of Satan are limited in their destructive activity... because Satan himself is restricted according to I Corinthians 10:13" (Jones 33).

## Dualism

Some attribute Satan's origin to the doctrine of dualism. ... The doctrine advocates that God, the source of all good, has always existed. And that Satan, the source of all evil, has always existed. The theory goes on to state that both God and Satan are equal in power, knowledge, and strength. The dualist believes that throughout all eternity these foes have been fighting each other and that one day there will be a winner. However, the dualist does not know who will ultimately win. They say, "Hopefully, God, but

who really knows?" But, the Bible tells us that Satan has already been defeated. His fate has been sealed. God is all-powerful, unlike Satan. Satan will one day be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and be tormented forever (Revelation 20:10). The Christian does not have to worry about how the battle will turn out. God has already won. (Jones 32-33).

Unless Christians are careful in their thoughts and words, they will unwittingly embrace the false doctrine of dualism. Satan has no hope whatsoever of triumphing over Almighty God.

## Summary

"Satan holds the unenviable title of the Chief of all sinners. He is the original sinner. He has practiced sin longer than any other" (Stacy 58). Every other sinner is simply following in the footsteps and the shadow of the Devil.

Indeed, Satan did realize many victories in his battle against God, including tempting mankind to sin in the Garden of Eden, from which the original pair was expelled. God, however, also realized many victories, ultimately and finally He is victorious, as was prophesied as early as Genesis 3:15. Especially the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is the prime victory of God over Satan from which he can never recover. God wins! Hence, His faithful followers are winners, too. The whole Book of Revelation is a volume of God's ultimate, complete and final victory over Satan. "After the cross, Satan could no longer accuse the brethren (Rev. 12:10-11)" (Jones 38).

Satan is behind the introduction of disease, disability and death into our world. As a consequence of the Satan inspired sin of Eve and Adam, plus widespread human sin leading up to the worldwide, Noahic flood, God altered the created world. Not because of the guilt of sins, but rather **due to the consequence of sins** back in patriarchal times, people since then experience sickness, injury and death. Likewise, earthly catastrophes of hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, avalanches, flooding, sinkholes, etc. are the consequences of sin committed 4,000 to 6,000 years ago, which led God to modify His creation.

Satan was bad news, and he remains very bad news for the human race. The Devil may offer “passing pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:25), but the “way of the ungodly shall perish” (Proverbs 1:6). The good news is that Satan will flee when we resist him (James 4:17). The way in which we can successfully resist Satan is by using the Word of God against him, just as Jesus Christ did (Matthew 4:1-11). The Gospel armor will suffice to protect us from the devices of the Devil (Ephesians 6:10-17; Hebrews 4:12). Each of us needs to be a courageous, spiritual warrior (2 Timothy 2:3)!

Satan is “waging war on earth,” and he “is the Christian’s personal enemy. ...Since Satan has waged war on the church, don’t be surprised that **he knows your name. He knows where you work and where you live**” (Jones 38 emphasis added).

# Chapter 14: Homily on Satan

## A Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8)

**Thesis:** To impress upon Christians the vulnerability to Satan when one does not avail himself of protection afforded through the combined defenses of other Christians.

### Introduction:

1. The apostle Peter was inspired to write 1 Peter 5:8.
  - a. The word “sober” means “to be free from the influence of intoxicants” (*Vine’s*).
  - b. To be “vigilant” is “to keep awake, i.e. watch” (*Biblesoft’s*).
  - c. “Adversary” means “an opponent (in a lawsuit)” (*Biblesoft’s*) and is ascribed to Satan, cf. 1 John 2:1.
  - d. The definite article (“the”) before the word “adversary” in the Greek indicates a particular adversary, here identified further (*Vincent’s*).
  - e. The word “devil” means “an accuser, a slanderer” (*Vine’s*).
  - f. Satan “is seeking” or plotting against one’s life (*Biblesoft’s*).
  - g. Some translations translate “walketh about” as “prowls.”
  - h. The word “devour” means “gulp entire” (*Biblesoft’s*).
2. Jesus said that Satan is a murderer and a liar, John 8:44.
  - a. The devil has children, according to the apostle John, 1 John 3:10.
  - b. Satan also masquerades as “an angel of light” and his followers represent themselves as “ministers of righteousness,” 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

### Body:

- I. **Satan, like a lion, attacks the young and defenseless.**
  - A. Satan attacks the babe in Christ who is not sufficiently armed with the knowledge of God’s Word.

1. Those who exercise themselves in the Word of God can more easily discern the difference between good and evil, Hebrews 5:12-14.
  2. Only a steady diet of God's Word can transform a baby in Christ into a full-grown Christian, 1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:13-14.
- B. Satan attacks those who don't know any better.
1. The "naïve" (NIV) or "unsuspecting" (NAS) are susceptible to being misled, Romans 16:18.
  2. The Old Testament also contrasts the "prudent" saint with the "naïve" saint, Proverbs 14:15; 22:3 NAS.
  3. Again, only the Word of God can satisfactorily educate the non-discerning or "simple" person, Psalm 19:7.
- C. Being or remaining young or defenseless Christians is just begging for Satan, like a lion, to gobble us up, Isaiah 28:9.

## **II. Satan, like a lion, attacks the weak or sickly.**

- A. Weak Christians are those whose consciences are not sufficiently educated.
1. The apostle Paul cautioned strong Christians to be careful not to unnecessarily offend the weak consciences of their brethren, Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8.
  2. Weak Christians do not have a right to remain weak or make demands on stronger Christians.
- B. Paul also described as weak and sickly Christians those who do not worship God properly (especially regarding the Lord's Supper), 1 Corinthians 11:30.
1. Paul further instructed Christians to "support" or care for the "weak" (*Biblesoft's*), Romans 15:1.
  2. Of course, weak and sickly Christians have a responsibility to participate in their own recuperation, Galatians 6:1-2, 5.
- C. Being or remaining weak or sickly Christians is just begging for Satan, like a lion, to gobble us up, Isaiah 35:3.

### **III. Satan, like a lion, attacks those alone or by themselves.**

- A. Christians are not supposed to be alone, but they are to worship and study together.
  - 1. The early church met as often as they could to worship and study, Acts 2:42.
  - 2. God requires Christians to worship together at least on each Lord's Day, Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
- B. Christians are not supposed to be alone, but they are to fellowship together.
  - 1. The early church met together for Christian fellowship as often as they could (sometimes daily), Acts 2:46.
  - 2. Sometimes that fellowship manifests itself in suffering together, Philippians 3:10.
  - 3. Christian fellowship includes cooperation in taking the Gospel to the world, Philippians 1:5.
  - 4. Fellowship may involve being prisoners together, Colossians 4:10; Philemon 23.
  - 5. Fellowship includes working together for the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Philemon 1.
  - 6. Importantly, Christians are “fellowheirs,” Ephesians 3:6.
- C. Being alone as Christians is just begging for Satan, like a lion, to gobble us up, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. The apostle Paul forewarned the Ephesian Christians not to “give place to the devil,” Ephesians 4:27.
- 2. Further, Paul instructed the Christians at Ephesus to put on the Christian armor to “be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” Ephesians 6:11.
- 3. James advised that when we resist the devil he will flee from us, James 4:7.

#### **Invitation:**

- 1. One is not resisting the devil so that he will flee as long as one has not obeyed the Gospel to become a Christian, Acts 2:38.
- 2. One is not resisting the devil so that he will flee as long as one gives the devil a place in his or her life, 1 John 1:9.

# Chapter 15: Pain & Suffering

## Cause & Effect Consequences of Sin

The Book of Job is the ideal occasion to study the topic of “Pain and Suffering.” The patriarch Job’s extreme suffering occupies 42 chapters of biblical text. He and we, too, want to know the answer to the questions: (1) “Why do good people often suffer despite their righteousness?” (2) “Why do bad people often prosper despite their sins?” The short answer is, “Satan is behind pain and suffering.” Satan certainly was responsible for the pain and suffering experienced by poor Job, and at least indirectly, Satan is equally responsible for pain and suffering today as well.

Pain and suffering came into the world as the *cause and effect* of sin entering the world. Satan, in the guise of a talking snake, persuaded mother Eve to violate God’s instructions in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). Subsequently, Adam also sinned. As consequences of sin, mankind was expelled from the Garden, women experience labor pains, death was initiated and the earth was modified from what it had been in creation. God cursed the ground with “thorns and thistles,” which necessitated hard work and sweat to produce crops.

As the centuries passed, humankind continued to sin greatly. Finally, man’s sins reached the breaking point, whereupon God could no longer tolerate it. Except for Noah and his family—eight souls in all (1 Peter 3:20)—God destroyed all other humans with a universal flood (Genesis 6). The means by which God implemented the great deluge forever changed the surface of our planet and its climate. Hence, because of widespread sin, God altered or replaced the laws of nature that existed previously with what we experience today. Sin, then, is behind disease, disability, death and natural disasters. Satan lies behind the sins of men as he ever encourages mankind to depart from divine instructions—just like he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The friends of Job were mistaken when they attributed the great sufferings of Job to some retribution of God toward him for secret sins. Likewise today, people are mistaken when they assert that God directly punishes righteous souls with severe adversity because of sins in their lives. Whatever it is that buffets one in this life is the consequence of someone's sin, but it is not necessarily the sin of the one suffering. Generally, disease, infirmities and catastrophes indiscriminately affect the righteous and the unrighteous alike as the consequences (not guilt) of sins committed by sinners who lived 4,000 to 6,000 years ago. In addition, some suffering today results from more contemporary sins, but not always because of sins by the ones suffering (e.g., drunkenness resulting in highway fatalities, assaults, murder, rape, etc.).

As it was with Job, the important consideration is how one reacts to the suffering that may batter him or his loved ones. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

## Misguided Atheists

Atheists claim that pain and suffering, along with the existence of evil, prove that there is no God. Essentially, they equate pain and suffering with evil. The argument goes something like this. If God desires to prevent evil and cannot, then He is not all-powerful—He is not God. However, if God could prevent evil but does not prevent it, then He lacks compassion and is not good—again, He is not God. This faulty reasoning neglects to consider (1) the cause and effect consequences of sin, (2) that pain and suffering refines one's character if we allow it to do so, (3) that pain and suffering helps one to keep his vision trained on the heavenly city. Another fundamental fallacy of the atheist point of view has to do with the concept of "evil."

...when a person raises the question of "evil," he is inadvertently appealing to some universal system of justice, which evil allegedly violates. But, if there is no God, hence no universal system of "righteousness," how could there be any such thing as "evil"? Does not the word

“evil” suggest the violation of some standard? Let atheism, therefore, define for us that standard by which certain things are judged to be “evil.” Actually, no atheist can, consistent with his own philosophy, even introduce the problem of evil. (Jackson, *Book of Job* 115)

## Wrong Choices

Every undamaged, thinking mind makes choices—many of which are inconsequential (e.g., color of socks to wear), while some choices result in pleasant or unpleasant consequences (e.g., prepare for a career, step in front of an oncoming bus). The ability to make choices involves freewill, with which God endowed humankind. “[W]here freedom of choice is permitted, there is certainly the possibility that finite creatures will make wrong choices,” which may “entail some adverse consequences” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 115). Brother Jackson denotes several wrong choices arising from several sources: “Personal Wrong Choices,” “Personal Wrong Choices of Others” and “Personal Wrong Choices of Former Generations” (*Book of Job* 116). Jackson decisively put the blame of choices made exactly where they belong when he penned at the same place: “You see, when God lovingly grants man free willpower, He must necessarily limit His own activity! Remember, unless there is the option to make evil choices, there is no real freedom of will!”

Mankind falls victim to natural calamities, but behind them lies the sin of ancient men and the consequences of sin. “Had it not been for man’s evil, the Flood would never have come; the features of the earth would not have been so altered; and man would not be suffering the consequences thereof today!” (Jackson, *Book of Job* 118). The earth we know today is not the planet on which either the first pair walked or even what the antediluvian populations experienced. The protective, worldwide canopy providing essentially a terrarium no longer exists. Instead of an equally distributed and regulated climate, the poles are frozen and the equator is tropical. The land has mountains that affect the winds. It rains now, whereas there does not seem to have been rain before the flood. The interaction of the various elements of this made-over,

after-sin world produces hurricanes, tornadoes and other more favorable weather patterns, too.

## **Benefits of Pain and Natural Laws**

We appreciate gravity when we realize that it prevents us from being hurled off our spinning globe into outer space. Yet, we do not appreciate gravity when we fall, when a building collapses or when an airplane falls from the sky. Nevertheless, the laws of nature protect us unless we violate them. Pain, never pleasant, alerts us that our bodies need attention; we know to stop doing something hurtful or possibly to seek medical attention. Difficulties and pleasantries of life engender a longing within us to reach out toward the eventual rest that remains for faithful children of God (Hebrews 4:9). We concur with brother Wayne Jackson that “suffering per se is not contrary to the goodness of God” (*Book of Job* 120). After all, God sent Jesus Christ into the world to be our suffering Savior on Calvary’s cross.

# **Chapter 16: The Ministry of Angels**

## **Introduction to Angels**

As is true regarding the biblical introduction of God or of Satan, the Bible does not dedicate space to precisely define either what are “angels” or in what other accommodative ways the term may be applied in Scripture. The Bible mentions “angels” “...incidentally as a fact, without furnishing any details to gratify curiosity” (*McClintock and Strong*). “The Bible rarely focuses on angels themselves; they are usually characters in larger stories about God’s dealings with man. Information that we know about angels is determined from whatever details emerge from these stories” (Parker 15). As with God and Satan, for instance, the student of the Bible must piece together information gleaned from several biblical references.

The Book of Job, though, introduces angels as a distinct, created group of beings to which Almighty God has assigned ministries or duties. From time to time, they must appear before God on His throne to give an accounting (“sons of God,” Job 1:6; 2:1). One imagines that angels travel around the world wherever mankind dwells for the benefit of humanity, just as Satan likewise travels “to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it” looking for whom he may snare with sin (Job 1:7; 2:2). Hence, a little study on angels at this point is warranted.

## **Definition & Examples**

Both Hebrew and Greek words translated “angel” mean “messenger.” As such, the word “angel” can refer to different persons or things according to the context in which the word “angel” appears. Frankly, this is largely true with most words; their exact meanings rely heavily on the context in which they are being used,

besides whatever inherent meanings they may have. Therefore, the Hebrew word for “angel” is rendered “messenger” in Job 1:14 and “messengers” in 1 Samuel 11:3, and the Greek word for “angel” appears as “messengers” in Luke 9:52. In none of those references was a member of the heavenly, angelic host intended, but in each instance “ordinary messengers” was meant. In other Old Testament passages, the word “messenger” is applied to prophets (Haggai 1:13; Malachi 3:1) and priests (Malachi 2:7). The word “angel” appears in Revelation 1:20 to refer to ministers of the churches of Asia. *McClintock and Strong* cites perceived examples of “impersonal agents” of pestilence, winds and plagues through the use of Hebrew word for “angels” translated “messenger” or “messengers.” The “**messenger** of Satan,” the apostle Paul’s description of his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7), likewise comes from the Greek word for “angel” (*angelos*).

While the word “angel” in both testaments of the Bible characteristically refers to the heavenly, angelic host, sometimes to human messengers and perhaps to intangible devices (e.g., pestilence, winds, plagues, etc.), the word “angel” occasionally applies in Scripture also to Deity (Genesis 22:11; Exodus 3:2, 6, 14).

## Origin & Nature

Angels are created beings, whose creation predates the creation of humanity (Colossians 1:16; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 148:2, 5). “Job 38:7 may imply, in the phrase “sons of God,” that the angels were created before the ‘foundation of the earth’ [Job 38:6]” (Pollard 12).

They are spirit beings, and therefore, angels do not have flesh and blood. Though angels are not eternal, they are immortal (i.e., they shall never die, Luke 20:36). Mankind is a dual creature—flesh and spirit being, and we, too, were created and are immortal. “[T]he fact that angels were created, teaches that they are not eternal! Though they will never die, they had a beginning” (Stacy 5). Though our human bodies will die, the spirits within us will not die either.

“Angels are also invisible to the naked eye” (Stover 201). Whenever angels manifested themselves on earth, they always appeared as adult men. Except when they were incognito

(camouflaged as though they were earthlings), in addition to human form, they radiated white brightness (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; Matthew 28:3; John 20:12; Acts 1:10). When they were meant to be seen, one could not overlook an angel. We know that we will not see an obvious angel this side of the grave since Bible miracles through which they were sometimes made visible have ceased. “One of the most vivid descriptions of an angel is given in Daniel 10:5-6” (Stacy 7).

I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. (Daniel 10:5-6 NKJV)

Incidentally, aside from cherubim and seraph angels, biblical descriptions of *ordinary angels* fail to reveal if they, too, have wings, and if so how many. They can fly, but wings are not specified (Revelation 14:6).

Angels occupy an existence below the Godhead (1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 1:4, 6) and above humans (Hebrews 2:6-9). However, righteous men will one day judge fallen angels (1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4).

In what sense will men judge angels? Matthew 12:41 has the answer. This verse says, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold a greater than Jonah is here.” The Ninevites will condemn many of the Jews, who lived in Jesus’ day. They did much with little. They repented at the preaching of Jonah. The Jews in Jesus’ day did little with much. The Jews failed to believe the very Son of God, who was in their midst in the robe of human flesh! ...Angels sinned though they had the marvellous privilege of being in the immediate presence of God! Many Christians will remain faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10), who have never known the strength and encouragement of being in

the immediate presence of God. In other words, the example of God's people will condemn angels. (Stacy 6)

Angels are superior to mankind in physical strength (2 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Peter 2:11) and knowledge. For instance, angels were responsible for protecting Daniel from a den of lions (Daniel 6:22) as well as safeguarding Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:28).

There are legions of angels in that host of superhuman beings (Matthew 26:53). There are too many angels for mortals to count (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 5:11). Angels do not marry, and by implication, then, they do not procreate (Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:35-36). "Since angels never marry, they do not reproduce. ...Thus, the number of angels will always remain the same" (Stacy 7).

Angels have freewill; they are not robotic any more than are we. Hence, some angels, of whom Satan is chief, exercised that volition to rebel against God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The balance of the angels who remain loyal to God choose not to sin. "The moral perfection of angels is shown by such phrases as 'holy angels' (Luke 9:26); 'the elect angels' (2 Timothy 5:21)" (*McClintock and Strong*).

## Angel Organization

Herein I am borrowing the phrase "Angel Organization" from Brian Jones in his little book, *Our Fascination with Angels* (14). He made an interesting comparison between the noticeable organization of both the home and the church with the administrations of angels. The church sports a hierachal arrangement descending from Jesus Christ as Head, to the elders of a congregation, and from there to the church's deacons, teachers, preachers and the balance of the members. The home again has Jesus Christ as Head over the husband, who is head over the wife and parents who are over children. "With all of this divine organization, should we be surprised that angelic beings also share an organizational system? ...angels too comprise a developed structure" (Jones 15).

Ephesians 1:21, Colossians 1:16 and 1 Peter 3:22 may represent good angel rankings, designated as **Principalities, Powers, Dominions** and **Thrones**. John Stacy in his book, *Citizens of Eternity*, noted that some think that the "elders" in heaven are also a

class of angels (18-19). Further, Ephesians 6:12 may represent to us “the hierarchy of evil angelic beings” (Jones 18).

## **Cherubim**

The singular for “cherubim” is “cherub.” The singular form appears 30 times in the Old Testament, and the plural appears another 65 times. Genesis 3:24 first introduces cherubim as they were placed in the Garden of Eden after the fall of mankind to prevent Adam and Eve from reentering paradise and having access to the Tree of Life. Later, cherubim adorned the curtains of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1). The Ark of the Covenant was fashioned with two cherubim figures overlaid with gold resting on its top. These were winged creatures with man’s hands under its wings. It was also full of eyes and had four different faces: a cherub’s, a man’s, a lion’s and an eagle’s (Ezekiel 10:1-22). A synonym for “cherubim” is “living creatures” (Ezekiel 10:15); Ezekiel 1:5-10 describes “living creatures” there as possessing four wings, hands, feet appearing like a calf’s foot, a burnished brass sheen and four faces (man, lion, ox and eagle). They could run like a bolt of lightning (Ezekiel 1:15).

## **Seraphim**

Seraphim are only mentioned by name twice, both times in the same passage (Isaiah 6:2, 6). This creature has six wings and one face. It inhabits the throne room of God.

## **Archangels**

Michael is the only archangel named in the Bible (Jude 9; cf. Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7), but evidently, he is not the only archangel (Daniel 10:13). An unspecified archangel will accompany our Lord at His Second Coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

## **Gabriel**

Gabriel is the only other angel whose name appears in Scripture, and the precise order of angels to which he belongs is not revealed. He is mentioned four times (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19,

26). The description of an angel noticed already was that of Gabriel (Daniel 10:5-6).

## Other Angels

There may be other classes of angels about which we know very little. For instance, some Bible students think the “elders” around the heavenly throne (Revelation 4:4) represent a class of angels, while some also believe that “the angel of his presence” (Isaiah 63:9) is still another classification of angels.

## The Angel of the Lord (Jehovah ASV)

“The Angel of the Lord” (“of Jehovah” ASV) is a specifically worded phrase that appears in nearly 60 instances. This special designation differs in application from what we customary think of as “angels.” In other words, “the Angel of the Lord” is no ordinary angel. That is because “[m]any of these passages have the angel of Jehovah saying or doing things that only God could do, or that only one with God’s authority could do” (Aebi 82). Consider a sampling of these passages, as well as other references with similar import that do not use the same phrase.

Hagar fled from Sarai in Genesis 16, but “the Angel of the Lord” intercepted her, comforted her and sent her back to Sarai and Abram. “The Angel of the Lord,” “the Lord” (“Jehovah” ASV) and “God” are used interchangeably (7-14). Inspired Moses, human penman of the Book of Genesis, validated the relationship of those designations through his recording it as such.

Genesis 18 opens with Abraham receiving a visit from “the Lord” (“Jehovah”) as one of the “three men” to whom the patriarch extended hospitality. The other two are identified as “angels” (Genesis 19:1). As Abraham and the three men traveled along, “the Lord” (“Jehovah”) and the two angels, Jehovah and Abraham bartered over the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:17-33). Compare with this narration the words of Jesus in John 8:56-58, for there our Lord identified Himself as having interacted with Abraham. Store this information away while we consider additional passages that either use the phrase “the Angel of the Lord” or refer to similar circumstances without using those certain words.

Genesis 22:1-19 chronicles the account of the willingness of Abraham to obey God by sacrificing his son Isaac. That context shows that “the Angel of the Lord” and “God” are references to the same person (11-12). Further, in Genesis 31:11-13, “the Angel of the Lord” told Jacob that He was God.

At the call of Moses to be the deliverer of the Israelites from Egypt, “the Angel of the Lord” spoke to him from out of a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-15). The context also uses the terms “Lord” or “Jehovah,” “God” and the “I Am” interchangeably with “the Angel of the Lord.”

Numbers 22:22-38 uses these words and phrase interchangeably: “Lord” or “Jehovah,” “Angel of the Lord” and “God.” This was the episode of Balaam, his donkey and the Angel of the Lord. In Judges 6, “the Angel of the Lord” and “Lord” (“Jehovah”) are used interchangeably for each other, and “Angel of the Lord” received worship from Gideon. In Judges 13, “the Angel of the Lord” is identified as “God,” and He was worshipped by the parents of Samson. Since angels do not receive worship, and only members of the Godhead may be worshipped, “the Angel of the Lord” must refer not to an ordinary angel, but instead to a member of the Godhead (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9).

Who is “the Angel of the Lord” (“Jehovah”)? From considerations of the interchangeability of “Jehovah,” “the angel of the Lord” (“Jehovah”) and “God,” as well as receiving worship, “the angel of the Lord” must refer to one of the three members of the Godhead. Three New Testament passages help us to determine which member of the Godhead is “the angel of the Lord.” During His ministry and while lamenting over Jerusalem, Jesus Christ claimed to have personally interacted with the nation of Israel anciently (Matthew 23:37). Then, the apostle Paul wrote by inspiration that it was Jesus Christ who accompanied and ministered to the Israelites at the time of their exodus from Egypt and subsequent wilderness wandering (1 Corinthians 10:1-4; cf. John 8:56-58). “Then the Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: ‘I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you’” (Judges 2:1). Hence, “the Angel of the Lord” or “Jehovah” was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. “The Spirit

and the Father are mentioned several times in both Testaments. However, it would seem that Christ is absent in the Old Testament except by way of prophecy. But from these passages we see that Christ was not dormant in the Old Testament. He was a theophany of God in the form of the angel of the Lord” (Jones 48).

## The Ministry of Angels

Today, “[a]ngels operate in the realm theology calls ‘providence’” (Hodge 13). The workings of God’s providence are hidden from humankind except where God has specifically revealed and confirmed instances of it (e.g., Joseph sold into Egypt, Genesis 50:20). Therefore, one cannot know the full scope of the ministry of angels in the Christian Era since miraculously confirmed revelation from God has been completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-12; Jude 3). However, historically, angels have had a wide range of interaction with mankind as God’s messengers.

Angels punished cities (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19:13), nations (e.g., Egypt, Exodus 12:23; Israelites, 2 Samuel 24:15-16), armies (Assyrian, 2 Kings 19:35) and a king (Herod, Acts 12:23). God rules in or among nations (Daniel 2:21; 5:21); part of how God continues to do that today may include the activity of angels in matters of God’s providence.

Angels also played a role in delivering the Old Testament Law. “[W]ho have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it” (Acts 7:53). “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19). “For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” (Hebrews 2:2-3).

Angels sometimes encouraged or emboldened the children of God. Angels encouraged Mary (Luke 1:26-38), women at the tomb (Matthew 28:5-7) and the apostle Paul (Acts 27:24) (Stacy 35).

“In the conversion of the Ethiopian, an angel brought him (the prospect) and the preacher together. ...An angel also played a role in the conversion of Cornelius” (Stacy 25-26). Angels have always expressed an interest in human salvation (1 Peter 1:10-12), and they remain keenly interested in the salvation of souls, rejoicing when souls repent of sin (Luke 15:10). Angels may yet play a part in the providential, behind the scenes, not obvious, facilitating of bringing prospects and teachers of God’s Word together—providing opportunity for conversion.

There is a ministry of angels in which they work at the bidding of God especially on behalf of humanity. “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14). “They minister to the saints, though unquestionably in an unseen, unfelt, and invisible way (Hebrews 1:14). They appear in the assembly of the saints, though again in a way entirely imperceptible (1 Corinthians 11:10, noting context)” (Pollard 12).

It is possible that sometimes they may yet appear in human form as they have from time to time throughout history (Genesis 18-19). “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2). Unlike one of the tasks that God previously further assigned them, “...they do not appear personally today with messages. If they did they would be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9)” (Pollard 12).

There certainly remains a ministry of angels in which I am personally very much interested. Angels await the passing from this life of each godly soul so they can personally escort and carry us to spiritual paradise. “Angels” plural appear in Luke 16:22; I am looking forward to at least two of God’s heavenly messengers awaiting me to facilitate my navigation through “the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23:4). The ungodly have not such angelic escort; Luke 16:22 simply says “the rich man also died.”

Angels will attend the Second Coming of our Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). In addition, a part of the ministry of angels that has not commenced just yet pertains to the aftermath of the Second Coming. “Angels shall reap, gather, sever, and burn. ...Mt. 13:39 ...Mt. 13:41-42...” (Stacy 30). The angelic host will participate in the Judgment of humanity, regarding

separations and assignments according to their sentencing by Jesus Christ.

Angels are worshipping God now, and they will always be worshipping God (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Hebrews 1:6). One day, the righteous will do the same along with them throughout eternity. Angels also stand at the gates of Heaven (Revelation 21:12).

Many Christians believe that since the cross, angels just sit around and do nothing. How untrue! Let us thank God for what angels have done and are doing today. Surely, when we consider the actions of angels, we should have renewed sense of awareness of the greatness and goodness of God.  
(Stacy 36)

God is watching out for us, and part of the way He accomplishes that is through the angelic host (Hebrews 1:14). Jacob's dreamy vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder between earth and heaven (Genesis 28:12) is a good symbol of frenzied activity for us to remember the benevolent ministry of angels toward righteous souls.

Were the angels to have no more ministry than what we have noticed, that would be enough. I am weary just contemplating some of what angels have done and what they continue to do.

## Guardian Angels

The Bible does not use the term “guardian angels.” Matthew 18:10 and some other verses are misconstrued in an attempt to support the doctrine of personal, individual *angelic bodyguards* of a sort. In actuality, Matthew 18:10 in its context refers to the general ministry of angels toward humans.

In using the phrase “their angels,” Jesus implies that angels are charged with the welfare of Christians. In this case, He refers to little ones who believe in Christ, presumably new or vulnerable Christians, comparable in their trust to little children (cf. vv. 1-5). He does not use the term “guardian angels” nor does He say there is a one-to-one assignment of an angel for each person or that an angel appears in

human form to rescue that person from danger or to deliver him or her from distress... There is an angelic ministry, and there is some means by which it is carried out. ....methods by which God effects His providential care of Christians. (Parker 16).

Furthermore, “[t]his passage says nothing about these angels doing anything upon the earth, rather it speaks of their looking upon the face of God in heaven” (West 17).

If mankind has *guardian angels*, at least one personally assigned to each innocent child and godly soul, they *aren't doing a very good job* of protecting their charges from disease or infirmity, accident or injury, bodily harm and death, etc. “If the purpose of a guardian angel is to preserve life, why do so many die prematurely? If the purpose of guardian angels is to keep us from sin, then why is it that so many Christians become unfaithful?” (Frizzell 7). “From what does the guardian angel if such there be, protect? Not temptation, not suffering, not agony, not pain, not sorrow, not death. Any view in conflict with known and demonstrable facts cannot be true” (Woods 18).

Dennis Gulledge observed that some noteworthy brethren in the recent past subscribed to the notion of guardian angels, including B.W. Johnson, H. Leo Boles and J.W. McGarvey. However, contemporary brethren almost universally concur that guardian angels are not warranted from study of the Scriptures. Still, some brethren yet suspect that we may have guardian angels (Stacy 29).

“The same arguments for objecting to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit would also apply with equal force in this case” to guardian angels (Gulledge 4).

The doctrine of “guardian angels” as currently taught involves many of the same errors and misconceptions of the theory now popular, with some among us of a direct, immediate and independent operation of the Holy Spirit – apart from the Word of truth. It supports, indeed argues, the premise that there is personal, independent direction from God, exercised upon his people today through mediums other than the inspired, infallible and all-sufficient word of God. Common to both views is the theory that there is

implantation of thoughts, impressions and leading upon the heart, bypassing all revealed religion, and that this motivation is achieved by direct impact of heavenly beings – in the case of the theory under review, by angels, and in the other, by direct immediate introduction of influences into the heart by the Holy Spirit. These views, both false, originated in denominational theology – not the Bible. (Woods 19)

## Summary

Brother John Parker provided an excellent synopsis of angels in an article appearing in the *Gospel Advocate* magazine some years back.

1. They are supernatural, below God and above man (Psalm 8:4-5).
2. They are created by God (Psalm 148:2-5).
3. They are spirits, although they have temporarily assumed bodily form (Hebrews 1:14; cf. Genesis 18-19).
4. They are vast in number (Revelation 5:11).
5. They are ordered by rank (Colossians 1:16; Jude 9).
6. Some fell from their original pure state (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
7. They attend the presence of God (Revelation 5:11-12).
8. They help God's people (Hebrews 1:14).
9. In the past, they have directly communicated and interpreted God's will to men (cf. Judges 13:3-21; Acts 8:26; 12:7-11).
10. Sometimes they have performed fearful acts in executing God's will (cf. 2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23; Matthew 13:41).
11. Angels were particularly prominent during Christ's ministry (cf. Luke 1:26-30; 2:1-14; Matthew 4:11; 28:2-6; John 20:11-12). (15)

Angels participated in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ on at least these occasions: an angel informed Joseph about the coming Messiah through his betrothed Mary (Matthew 1:18-24); angel Gabriel explained to Mary what was about to unfold (Luke 1:26-38); an angel steered the wise men home a different way to avoid the murderous King Herod (Matthew 2:13-20); angels ministered to Jesus Christ following His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11);

Mark 1:12-13); an angel strengthened our Lord at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43); angels attended the resurrection of Christ (Matthew 28:5-7; John 20:12-13); two angels were present at the Ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:10); and angels will accompany our Lord at His Second Coming (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7) (Myers 17). Though these citations pertain to our Lord, our Lord's ministry pertained to our salvation. Hence, by ministering to Jesus Christ, angels were performing their ministry to us at the same time (Hebrews 1:14).

Doubtless, we would like to know more about angels than what is revealed. In addition, we would like more clarity on what does appear in Scripture about angels. However, we will have to be content with the portrait of angelic beings siphoned from scattered biblical texts that mention them, often in a passing way (Deuteronomy 29:29).

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